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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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SCHOLARS DISCUSS DEMOCRACY IN ARAB WORLD

Kuwait AL-TALI'AH in Arabic 24 Dec 80 pp 27-34

[Article: "Democracy in the Arab World"]

[Text] Committees are being formed. Resolutions and declarations are being published. Scholars from all parts of the Arab world call upon one another, correspond, debate. The motive for all this activity, the issue on everyone's mind: democracy.

If democracy as everyone insists is government by the people, how could this goal be achieved? By resorting to one-party rule? By adopting a multi-party system? By abolishing all parties? Many questions come to one's mind; but before speculating on the issue one must be a scholar. Every party involved in this debate claims to possess this attribute.

The issue of democracy was certainly on the minds of all who took part in the seminar "Democracy in the Arab World," which was held on 12-15 November at the I'lal al-Fasi Hall, located in a quiet suburb of Rabat, Morocco.

The group which organized the seminar--the Association of Intellectuals--was formed shortly after Anwar al-Sadat's 1977 visit to Jerusalem. The association--consisting primarily of young educated Moroccans--is sustained by membership dues and contributions from a variety of sources. It has no permanent headquarters. Meetings are held in private homes. The association's meetings are dedicated to the discussion of intellectual and cultural issues, topics the members view as of vital importance to the development of the Arab world. To date, the association has sponsored three other seminars, one on Moroccan problems, and two on problems facing the Arab world. The first of these, held on 26-28 April, 1979, focused on the topic "Arab Unity: Theory vs. Application," and was attended by many Arab politicians and party leaders. The second seminar, held on 13-15 December, 1979, centered on the topic "The Zionist Strategy in the Middle East." In addition to the Arab leaders who participated in the first seminar, the second seminar was attended by Professor Carmonese, a lecturer at Rome University and a member of the Italian-Arab Friendship Society.

The seminar that dealt with Moroccan problems was held in April, 1980, and centered on the theme "Democracy in Principle, Practice and Education." It was attended by representatives of a number of Moroccan political parties, including the People's Socialist Union, the Progress and Socialism Party, and the Istiqlal [Independence]

Party. Preparations for the current seminar, the third in the series of seminars on pan-Arab problems, were begun in February, 1980. This seminar is preparatory for a fourth one on the same topic. Invitation letters--including a statement by the association emphasizing the need to press on with the debate on democracy--have already been sent to potential Arab delegates. In addition to underscoring the issue of democracy as one of the Arab world's fundamental problems, the statement alleges that the absence of democracy is responsible for [political] deterioration on the Arab scene and a crisis of confidence between the governed and their rulers. The statement attributes the Arab world's political, economic and social ills to the absence of democratic institutions.

The opening session of the conference was very hot, despite the cold weather outside. According to Moroccan papers, Egypt was the undisputed star. Scarcely had Khalid Muhyi al-Din and Lutfi al-Kholi entered, when the conference hall reverberated with shouts of "Oh agent Sadat, you have sold us and sold the Nile River," and "Palestine is Arab, not for trading." The conference expressed solidarity with the Lebanese Nationalist Movement. Because of illness, Khalid al-Hasan was unable to attend the opening session. Lutfi al-Kholi, speaking for the absent Khalid al-Hasan, addressed the Palestine issue in the name of the Egyptian faction which opposes the Camp David accords.

The delegates expressed solidarity with the Moroccan people and thanked the association which planned the conference. They also paid tribute to the memory of Mahdi ibn Baraka, Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir and Kamal Junblat, all martyred in the cause of Arab democracy.

Following the opening speeches, the sponsor of the conference presented the gathering with a working paper delineating the association's position on the issue of democracy in the Arab world. The paper included an analysis of the reasons behind the lack of progress of democratic institutions in the Arab world. It blamed colonialism, backwardness, and the weakness of the democratic voice in the region. The paper concluded with a series of questions relating to the question of democracy.

The working sessions began at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday and continued through Saturday afternoon. The schedule had to be changed frequently, either because of speakers who did not show up or others who spoke beyond their allotted time. Because of these delays the second working session was canceled. The program consisted of three daily sessions: 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Each session was presided upon by a member of the association's executive or administrative staff. Each speech was followed by a discussion period.

Speakers and a Summary of their Addresses

Isam Nu'man:

Mr Nu'man's address centered on the problem of democracy in the Arab world. It enumerated a number of obstacles that obstruct the spread of democratic institutions in the Arab world including poverty, backwardness, illiteracy, the preoccupation of Arab regimes with imaginary military and economic battles, and imperialism. Mr Nu'man laid down a number of principles for advancing the cause of democracy. In particular, he stressed the need for giving the people a role in the formulation of policy and the decision-making process. He emphasized the need to accept the

premise that the individual has value in and of itself, and stressed the importance of the freedom of expression and multiplicity of views. He concluded by calling for the creation of a broad, anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist coalition, with a clear political program.

The Baath Party:

The Baath Party of Syria was represented by Jalal Faruq al-Sharif. Its Iraqi counterpart was represented by Muhsin Khalil. The two speakers addressed the issue of democracy from the perspective of the ideologies espoused by their respective parties. The two speakers leaned heavily on theory and made deliberate efforts to avoid confrontation. It is noteworthy that these two addresses were the only ones to be printed and distributed at the conference.

Burhan Ghalyun:

Mr Ghalyun's topic was "What is behind Democracy and Tyranny?" In his address, Mr Ghalyun indicated that prisons and suppression are a common denominator among the Arab regimes. He condemned this form of reactionary tyranny and claimed that its practitioners differ only in the degree of their despotism. He insisted that progress could come only if the status quo is changed and is followed by new conceptions of society and social progress.

The next session centered on a discussion of the Moroccan experience and the country's political parties understanding of that experience. Participants in this session included Ibrahim Bu Tabib, Isma'il al-'Alawi, and 'Abd al-Latif 'Awwad. Ahmad al-'Arabi, the chief editor of AL-'ALAM--the official organ of al-Istiqlal Party--sent his apologies for not being able to attend the session.

The Egyptian Participants:

Egypt was represented at the evening session by Khalid al-Hasan Muhyi al-Din, and Munh al-Sulh. Their speeches generated the liveliest discussions of the day. Mr al-Hasan began his address by giving the etymology of the word politics and, based on that, he defined politics as the art of leading in the interest of society. He asserted that the different manners in which democracy is viewed in Europe on one hand, and in the Middle and Far East on the other, are attributable to the different ways in which the people of these regions think. He claimed that Arab youth educated in the West think like Westerners but speak like Arabs. Based on this observation, the speaker concluded that [political] reactionaries in the Arab world are even worse than their Western counterparts. The Arab rightists, he went on, differ drastically from European rightists, while Arab leftists are yet to catch up with international leftists. "The Arabs," according to the speaker, "have a split [political] personality. They live in conformity with political conceptions which they recognize as backward." Mr al-Hasan urged the Arabs to search first for their identity before inquiring what type of democracy they prefer.

Khalid Muhyi al-Din began his address by reading a report he had carried with him from Cairo. The report described how [anti-government] forces managed to ensure the failure of [Israel's] Navon's mission to Cairo. His address dealt with three topics:

- Democracy before the July 23 revolution
- Democracy in post-revolution Egypt through 1970
- Democracy in the shadow of the [present] opposition.

While Mr Muhyi al-Din's remarks on the first two topics were sketchy, he dwelt at length on the present opposition, the anti-government revolution, as he called it. He claimed that al-Sadat's suppressive laws are not being applied to his supporters and government lackeys. He spoke about the "Law of Shame," the anti-demonstration and anti-strike laws, and the stream of other laws that are contradictory to one another. He claimed that Egyptians are limited [in their political choices] to yes or no. He concluded with this remark: "While al-Sadat's law provides for a 25-year prison term for anyone taking part in or encouraging a demonstration or strike, the Egyptian people will [eventually] rise in one massive demonstration to realize their national and democratic goals."

Munh al-Sulh spoke of Lebanon's experiment in democracy. "Like Arabs in other countries," he said, "we have oscillated between a backward parliamentary system and military coups. The two options are reactionary and serve only the interests of those classes with ties to international imperialism. While Lebanon's political system may be unique, the Lebanese Fascists, upon recognizing that their reactionary parliamentary system was beginning to benefit the Lebanese nationalists, struck down that system, leaving the country the option of military coups."

Absolute Rulers:

Fawwaz al-Tarabulsi's address, titled "Toward a New Democracy," contained general suggestions which could be well used to advance the cause of democracy in all Arab countries. He called for:

- Bringing the Arabs to equality with other nations
- Ridding the Arab world of feudalism and tribalism
- Encouraging secularism--without which, he claimed, there could be no democracy
- Unifying every Arab country
- Liberating women
- Giving the masses a greater role in the decision-making process.

He criticized one party systems, which, in his words, led to relinquishing the reigns of government to absolute rulers. He claimed that the Arab countries are predominantly governed by absolute rulers who, in addition to their absolute powers, practice suppression and oppression.

Lutfi al-Kholi's unduly long address prompted the presiding officer to urge him to conclude his remarks. In a race with time, the speaker spoke of the necessity to interact with the masses in an effort to learn how best to advance the struggle for democracy, and urged the Third World nations to lay down a theoretical foundation

for their own brand of democracy. Mr al-Kholi asserted that the problem of democracy in the Arab world stems in part from a belief by its proponents that they could skip the capitalist stage entirely.

Based on his feeling that the public mood was opposed to imperialism, the speaker explained his perception of how the Arab struggle would proceed:

- Continued opposition to the Zionist enemy and the Camp David accords,
- A fight against poverty and against control of the oil revenues by an infantile class
- A fight for fundamental human rights.

Victory, according to the speaker, hinged upon:

- The creation of private and pan-Arab organizations
- The setting up of watchdog groups to oversee elections in Arab countries
- The stepping up of dialog among the progressive groups in the Arab world.

Suppression and One-Party Rule:

Ahmad al-Mistiri, a Tunisian, addressed the conference in his local dialect. "The distancing of the masses from the revolutionaries," he said, "is the fundamental reason for the failure to advance the cause of democracy."

One result of the technological and scientific advances [in the Arab world], he said, was the transfer of total control to the governments. The governments now control money and the media, and they have the power to impose suppression. The speaker then criticized experiments in liberal democracy and socialism, as well as one-party systems, which, he labeled, the leader's or the dominant party's system. Both designations, he claimed, were the same in disguise. The difference between them, according to him, is no more than the difference between "Haj Musa" or "Musa the Haj." "Both systems," he said, "boil down to absolute rule."

The speaker went on to list two requirements for a democratic system: 1) Respect for human rights, and 2) delineating the relationship between wealth and politics on moral and legal grounds.

Morocco's experiment in democracy was the topic of discussion at a second conference session. The participants this time were Khalid 'Alyawah, 'Abd al-Karim Ghallab and 'Abd al-Wahid Suhayl.

Khalid 'Alyawah spoke on democracy as a social experiment. He discussed the Socialist Union's conception of the role of the opposition, which, he described, as a constructive one. He insisted that this constructive role remains alive so long as the masses remain involved in the struggle, and even after they assume power. He rejected the role of the party, any party, as intermediary between the masses and those in power. "The party's role," he said, "was to assist the masses in gaining power." He suggested that the party could be most helpful in this respect by nurturing the creation of people's organizations as well as independent labor and professional associations.

'Abd al-Karim Ghallab said that the Moroccan people's struggle from pre-independence days to the present has always been associated with democracy. "The Moroccan experiment," he said, "while similar in many respects to the experience of Third World and other Arab countries, remains distinct." He created the 1958 Human Freedoms Law with giving Moroccans the opportunity to fight for democracy by constitutional authority.

'Abd al-Wahid Suhayl discussed Morocco's experiment in democracy with particular emphasis on the inter-relations of the opposition parties. He referred to the 1962 and 1970 constitutions to buttress his argument that these democratic experiments failed to achieve their intended goals because they did not provide for a healthy and free economy.

The conference agenda included a session to evaluate the conference and come up with a final resolution. The vast differences among the participants, however, precluded the issuance of such a resolution. The last session on Saturday evening, 15 November, closed without a resolution despite the fact that Khalid Muhyi al-Din in his final address had already sketched the outlines of such a resolution.

The differences centered on the following items:

- The use of the word "reactionary," to which some delegates had objected;
- The Iran-Iraq war. Some delegates insisted on a statement of support for Iraq; others demanded a condemnatory statement.
- The desert war [Algeria-Morocco dispute over the POLISARIO Movement]. The delegates were sharply divided on this issue.
- Criticism of one-party systems. Certain Arab states expressed opposition to the criticism.

Finally, under the pressure of travel itineraries, and recognizing that the best solution is a compromise, the delegates accepted to make fundamental concessions. After 2 days of bitter haggling, a resolution was issued on the morning of Monday, 17 November. The resolution was essentially a concordant. It expressed gratitude for the sponsoring association and the Moroccan people, and affirmed that the fight for democracy was part and parcel of the struggle against the Imperialists, the Zionists, and their lackeys. The resolution affirmed that the fight for democracy was a central component of the Arab struggle that cannot be abandoned in favor of economic development. One delegate was determined to include a statement proclaiming the unity of all Arab territories. (This was in fact the compromise terminology over the Iran-Iraq War and the desert dispute.) The delegates stopped short of condemning the all too common practice of outlawing opposition parties in Arab countries as well as their governments' refusal to recognize elementary democratic rights. Some delegates insisted on injecting a criticism of one-party governments. (This was the compromise over the 4th point.) The resolution went on to demand the existence of bona fide political representation in Arab governments, emphasized the need to improve relations among the democratic, nationalist, and progressive forces.

The Black Scene:

When Lutfi al-Kholi rose to address the opening session, the lights went out in the conference hall. Despite the temporary blackout, he continued to speak with a powerful voice. The hushed silence was frequently interrupted with applause. Some delegates lit matches in an attempt to dispel the darkness. The blackout period was alternately marked with lighted matches, applause and hand clapping. Were these dark moments a bell tolling a signal to all those present--some of whom were official government representatives--that the time has come to free the Arab citizen from the political darkness that envelopes his life, the stifling of dissent, the suppression, the outright persecution? Was the applause an expression of the Arab citizen's willingness to sacrifice all in order that the sun may shine upon his homeland?

Arab folklore has it that three things cannot possibly exist: ghouls, al-'Anqa' [a mythical animal], and the true friend. The delegates to the conference added a fourth: democracy [in the Arab world]. But despite the dark scene, our hopes remain high. Before we begin to answer questions, however, let us turn to the participants for their views. We present here the views of Khalid Muhyi al-Din, Fawwaz al-Tarabulsi, Burhan Ghalyun, 'Abd al-Wahid Suhayl, Khalid 'Alaywah, and 'Abd al-Latif 'Awwad.

Khalid Muhyi al-Din:

A Free Officer [Reference to a group of military officers who engineered Egypt's coup against King Faruq], member of the Revolutionary Command Council, and secretary general of Egypt's Progressive Unified Coalition Party, Mr Muhyi al-Din had this to say:

"The conference is very important not only because it comes at an opportune time, but also because the problem of democracy is one of the central problems facing the Arab people. The most important task now facing the Arab world is to oppose the Camp David conspiracy whose aim is to impose a settlement on American terms, and to lure the Arab countries one by one into jumping on the Sadat-Israel bandwagon. This is our central battle, and our efforts must be directed at foiling this American conspiracy.

It is most unfortunate that the Arab masses--including the Egyptian people, who are now aware of the dangers inherent in this conspiracy--are unable to press their opposition freely. Owing to the absence of democratic institutions, the opposition in Egypt and in the rest of the Arab world is being suppressed. The problem of democracy has, therefore, become a fundamental issue. The absence of democracy not only deprives the Arab governments of gaining a measure of popularity among the masses, but deprives the people of having a voice in the decision-making process.

There are now new ominous reports: A European [peace] proposal, a new American proposal, and an attempt to entice Jordan into a federation with the proposed autonomous part of Palestine.

This proposal was recently voiced by al-Sadat, and was repeated by Peres during a visit to Cairo a few days ago. Peres, by the way, is the one who at one time proposed to settle the Palestinians in Jordan.

The tragedy of the Arab world is that the masses are removed from the liberation movement. The reason for this separation is that the Arab regimes forbid exchanges of opinion and consultation. Many Arab countries, like Egypt, crush opposition. The methods of stifling dissent may vary, but the outcome is the same: the opposition is kept quiet.

From this we see that the problem of democracy is tied up with the problem of political power. Democracy is characterized by sharing. Democracy means that every Arab will acquire the right to speak his mind without fear of being harmed. This is the problem that is uppermost in the minds of Arab youth and the Arab liberation movement across the Arab world. This is why this conference is timely. It gave the participants an opportunity to express their views and to issue them collectively in the form of a concordant of honor.

We, the participants, have arrived at a common agreement, one that underscores the importance of the struggle for democracy, for Arab human rights, the right of all groups to express their views. Ours is no small undertaking. It is inconceivable that Zionist Israel, the occupier of Arab land, should grant these rights to its citizens, while we, the victims, remain deprived by our own rulers of the same rights."

Fawwaz Tarabulsi:

The speaker, a member of the political bureau of the Communist Action Organization, had this to say:

"We thank the sponsors of the conference in Rabat for providing this rare opportunity for public opinion shapers to discuss openly and democratically a problem of central importance to the Arab struggle, namely the issue of democracy.

The conference has added significance in that it gives the two wings of the Arab struggle, the eastern and the western, an opportunity to meet and discuss issues of common concern."

Burhan Galyun:

Mr Galyun, a Syrian struggler presently residing in Europe, and author of the book "The Status of Democracy," said it was regrettable that the conference did not include representatives from all political persuasions in the Arab world, such as Marxists and Nationalists despite the fact that, with few exceptions, it was well attended by representatives with direct links to the [Arab] governments. Nevertheless, he added, the mere convening of the seminar was a major victory for Arab, democratic, public opinion. The conference, he said, signalled the beginning of the debate on the issue of democracy. The mere fact of the debate, he continued, was more important than what the various parties had to say, for it signalled the beginning of more extensive and wide-ranging discussions.

He said that democracy was not something to be adopted whimsically, but a goal to be realized at the expense of a continuous struggle for human, social, economic and political rights. It is a struggle, he added, to compel the Arab governments to concede the aforementioned rights to their citizens.

The speaker expressed doubt that any Arab government or ruler would grant these rights voluntarily. Rather, he said, democracy must be won by continuous struggle, regardless of the ruler's ideological and social philosophy.

In concluding his remarks, the speaker praised the conference as a first modest step to remind the people of their rights and to nudge public opinion and Arab political organizations to intensify the struggle for their rights.

'Abd al-Wahid Suhayl:

Mr Suhayl, member of the political bureau of the Moroccan Progress and Socialism Party, said:

"In view of the fact that our country was privileged to host the conference, and considering further that the conference provided a forum for a large number of representatives from various liberation movements, often with diverse political views, to debate and exchange ideas, we must hail the conference as a positive achievement. I believe it is a very positive achievement, one that the Arab world surely needs in this difficult time. I also believe that the delegates are agreed on the necessity to maintain the struggle for democracy and democratic rights throughout the Arab world, and on the need to give the masses a decisive voice in directing our struggle against Zionism, Imperialism and reaction. Another positive accomplishment, in our view, is that the debate was frank, probing and conducted in a brotherly fashion. The opinions expressed by our brethren have been very beneficial, and we shall try to have them published in our newspapers. Our Moroccan political parties, which regrettably are not accustomed to debates on a country-wide level, have been encouraged by the example of this pan-Arab conference. The session set aside for Moroccan representatives provided an excellent opportunity for our political parties to sound their views on the conduct and future outlook of the struggle for democracy.

It is my hope that the conference will help the Arabs to acquire a deeper understanding of democracy, and that other conferences will follow soon in Morocco or in other parts of the Arab world without hindrance or interference by the governments of the host countries. I look forward to more debates by the Arab liberation organizations, and to the day when each of us can express his views. I look forward to the day when we all agree, even minimally, on how to proceed with our struggle for democracy in the interest of all our people. An agreement of this type would be quite an achievement, even though we may not agree on all political, social, and economic matters. There will always be differences among the liberation organizations of the Arab world."

Khalid 'Alaywah, member of the administrative committee of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces of Morocco, spoke bitterly and dramatically. He said:

"One of our top priorities is to underscore the fact that this conference is itself a step forward in the struggle of the many progressive forces in the Arab world. The conference must be seen as an attempt to create public awareness of the nature of governmental power exercised in most of our Arab societies, and to point out how relations between the governments and the governed ought to be.

Should we decide to go beyond the present goal of this conference, namely to arouse opposition to the burdensome [political] life in the Arab world and the crisis faced by those who aspire to a democratic way of life, let it be said that the Arab people and those striving have begun their fight here and now. Let it be said that this conference marked the beginning of a plan, one that not only takes into consideration national problems such as the liberation of Arab land, backwardness, reaction, and imperialism, but one whose ultimate goal is the liberation of the Arab citizen, politically, economically, socially and culturally. Let this conference stand as a refutation of the theses advanced by the colonialists and quasi-colonialists--and practiced by some reactionary Arab governments--that the Arab man, because of an inherent biological defect, is incapable of understanding a form of government based on cooperation.

Let us remember that while this conference is important, it will not solve our problem. Conferences and seminars do not solve problems. The ultimate solution depends primarily on our willingness to struggle. That our struggle has already begun is amply evident in the list of those who have fallen martyr not only in the battle of liberation, but in the fight for economic development or cultural liberation. In the final analysis, those who died have given their lives in the struggle for human rights in the Arab world.

The participants in this conference have outlined the manner in which the struggle for democracy in the Arab world should be carried forward.

1. On the local level: Preservation of fundamental human rights should be among the first priorities of all democratic and progressive organizations.
2. Creation of a societal model whose pursuit will lead to liberation. Such a model, in order to succeed, must be based on socialist principles which, in contrast to political philosophies which set the state or one-party rule above everything to the detriment of society, place respect for society above all else.
3. Since no Arab society possesses the resources to counteract the near absolute power of its government, the success of the struggle against backwardness and for democracy hinges upon unity. Without unity among the Arab masses, there will be no democracy.

One of the participants in the conference was 'Abd al-Latif 'Awwad, director of AQWAL magazine, an outspoken publication that, for the time being, is being issued on a monthly basis. Mr 'Awwad's address was entitled "The Radical Democratic Line." Here is what Mr 'Awwad told us:

"The paper which we presented at the conference dealt not only with our experiment with democracy in Morocco, but with the larger and more fundamental issue of change throughout the Arab world. It set forth our views on how the radical democratic strategy, as we call it, ought to be carried out, and reflected the beliefs we have been expressing in AQWAL and other forums.

Our participation in the conference had two goals:

1. To present our position on the issue of democracy and to learn the views of other participants from the Arab world.

2. To encourage a continuation of the debate that has already begun between Arab strugglers and intellectuals at both ends of the Arab world, in the belief that such a debate is essential to the success of the radical democratic strategy.

We believe that the conference marked a turning point in Arab history, one that has a direct bearing on our future destiny as a nation. It heralded the beginning of a qualitative change in our political thinking, one that will affect the evolution of the political process. The conference has set the stage for an eventual transition from discussion to action. While no one said so openly at the conference, those who debated the issues must now realize that only through action will the potential benefits of democracy be achieved.

The conference was a brilliant success. The extent of representation coupled with the enthusiastic response of the delegates and the public contributed to that success. The final resolution was further evidence of that success. We value the efforts of the association which sponsored the event, and are confident that it will continue to contribute to the development of Arab political thinking, and to point, through more extensive debates, to the need for change and an eventual transformation of Arab life.

We need more societies and clubs of this type. Organizations modeled on the association which sponsored the conference are essential to the development of Arab thinking, the promotion of progress and unity, and the opening of new horizons before the Arab nation.

We were privileged to represent AQWAL at the conference, to meet strugglers from the eastern part of the Arab world, and to join them in one struggle for common objectives.

9063

CSO: 4802

INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

WPC, ARAB TRADE UNIONS ISSUE COMMUNIQUE

LD252144 Tripoli JANA in English 1830 GMT 25 Feb 81

[Text] Damascus, 25 Feb (JANA)--The International Union of Arab Trade Unions and the World Peace Council has called for the abolition of the military alliance existing between the signatories of the Camp David accords and the American rapid deployment force which undoubtedly constituted a spearhead for aggression against the Arab people and the peoples of Africa and Asia.

In a communique issued in both Damascus and Helsinki at the end of the union delegation's visit to the council's headquarters in Helsinki, the two sides pledged to launch an effective campaign calling for the dismantlement of the American military bases established in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Bahrain, Oman, Sudan, Kenya and Diego Garcia.

The two sides also expressed their deep concern about the participation of the French, British, and other of America's allies, military fleets in the manoeuvres carried out by the American fleet in the Arab Gulf region and the Indian Ocean.

The two sides condemned the increasing French military presence in Africa using the Chad question as a pretext to threaten the security and sovereignty of many African countries. In relation to this, the two sides warn of threats directed by the imperialist and reactionary forces against the socialist people's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and of their attempts to undermine the African peoples' unity.

The two sides reiterated their strong condemnation of the Camp David and Washington accords and stressed their opposition to the so called Jordanian option and to any other liquidationist plan which does not guarantee the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, to exercise their right to self-determination and to establish their independent state over the national soil.

The two sides strongly denounced the threats practised by imperialism and the reactionary forces against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, particularly the Egyptian military buildup on its borders, and also against the Democratic Yemen.

The two sides indicated that the main objective of all these political and military plans was to reinforce the exploitative practices of oil monopolies and other multinational companies. The two sides also affirmed their total support for all

Arab nationalist and progressive forces, the steadfastness and confrontation front, the Arab Peoples Congress, and also for the Lebanese nationalist movement's struggle for an Arab unified democratic Lebanon.

They also expressed their solidarity with Syria which stood now at the vanguard of the confrontation countries to foil the conspiracies directed against the Arab nation.

CSO: 4820

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY, GULF SECURITY, DEFENSE DISCUSSED

Political Participation in Bahrain

Manama AL-ADWA' in Arabic 17 Jan 81 p 3

[Text] There is a current proverb whose fame has become widespread and whose validity has become evident. Briefly, this proverb or statement is this: politics is exactly like swimming. Just as swimming cannot be learned unless the learner "thrashes about" the surface of the water with his arms--even though he may do so in a haphazard fashion as he attempts to keep his body floating on the surface and succeeds in avoiding drowning by moving continuously even though people may laugh at him--so is the practice of politics. Anyone who wants to practice politics has to go through a similar stage. A person who wants to work in politics must enter political battles and must withstand the requirements of membership in political institutions. These requirements search for and concern themselves with the choice of balanced statements, self-control under certain circumstances and knowledge of subjects which a deputy has to talk about. It may be that the least said on such matters the better.

Thus, we see and observe that a person who seeks parliamentary representation in the democratic countries does not achieve it until he goes through a stage of preparation and preparedness during which he is subject to complicated and bitter experiments within the activities of his party. First, before he is qualified to become a candidate, the [novice politician] is not seen in the process of "thrashing about" in the water. This is contrary to what happens in those countries where parliamentary action is recent and especially in those countries that do not have [political] parties, as is the case with us, for example. A deputy has to go through the stage of "walking on thin ice" so he can become skillful in discussing and defending his point of view without excitement and provocation. He would go through a reasonable period of time until he becomes knowledgeable of the components of parliamentary life. He would enrich this parliamentary life and be enriched by experiences on both

scenes without having his activity appear to be recalcitrant, with him plodding through its difficult course.

Thus, as long as "thrashing about" in the water and the failure to swim do sometimes provoke laughter and other times boredom with the student becoming averse to learning to swim to save himself time and energy, so is the case with parliamentary action. If it appears to be failing and alienating the masses, it not only arouses aversion, but it also closes the door to this unsuccessful person so he cannot get a parliamentary seat again lest his attainment of a parliamentary seat cause serious harm and impede the course of progress and development in the country where such representation is taking place.

Accordingly, we were confident and certain, as were many others who believed as we did, that if the parliamentary experiment in Bahrain were extended; if the council completed its four sessions during its constitutionally determined 4-year term; and if new elections were then held, a not insignificant number of those who had parliamentary seats during the first session of parliament would not be reelected. We say this with all due respect to those persons as good citizens. If we were to bring back the memory of this short period of time and if we were to remember the displeasure that prevailed among the different groups, movements and ideologies of the masses because of what was happening, we would not have expected more than what did take place. There were futile discussions between individual deputies; between groups of deputies through their blocs, which used to be figuratively called the left bloc, the center bloc and the clergymen's bloc; and between the deputies and the government represented by 14 ministers. In addition, there were those written, elaborate, resounding and sharp speeches which a deputy would read after having prepared them in advance or after having received help in preparing them by one of his acquaintances or a member of his bloc. If we were to remember all this and other kinds of "fudging" that involved wasting the council's time, we would not have expected a greater failure than that in which this experiment has eventually resulted. Tremendous efforts in national action were made before and after the experiment which inflicted an exorbitant loss that blew away the principle of organized participation through its constitutional and cultural institutions. What's more, we would also be ignoring the fact that some deputies went to ministers' offices asking for favors and facilities for themselves or for their proteges, sidestepping thereby the laws and the priorities.

This does not mean that all the reasons for suspending the experiment and for its tremendous loss are attributable only to the factors to which we have referred. The fact is that the scene of ongoing operations was scarcely without the severe and strong winds that were blowing on it from abroad. These factors converged and helped suspend the burgeoning experiment that may have come before its time and may have overstepped the inherited considerations and traditions that had been influential forces in the region, striving for it, ruling it, controlling it and insisting

on keeping it at arm's length from the trodden paths of the age and its requirements. It makes no difference whether the failure of the experiment was caused directly by the ignorance of the deputies and their poor practices or by those storms that blew from abroad and uprooted the roots of the experiment from its given soil, or whether or not Dr Nakhlah is of Palestinian origin—we had previously mentioned erroneously that he was Lebanese. The milk has been spilled, and as it is said, it is futile and short-sighted to "cry over spilled milk." There must then be a way out through which we can establish a dialogue to ensure that there will be a successful experiment and that the principle of secure, stable participation will be achieved. This is a principle that has become clear and evident through the urgent desire that was expressed by the topmost leaders of our country with the dawn of independence when they moved to the stage of being at the helm [of the ship of state] with the people of Bahrain exercising full sovereignty on their land and their waters.

There is no doubt that a purposeful, constructive dialogue would inevitably lead us to the shift for which we are hoping. It would be in keeping with the natural development of our country and it would realize the aspirations of the citizens from one generation to the other. Let us begin first by cultivating mutual confidence and by forgetting the murkiness of the previous experience so we can sail safely to a safe port.

If we may propose some choices and put forth suggestions from a purely personal point of view, we would prefer to postpone all this until we could see more clearly and until we could have a sense of the response to all of this from the principal sources that are concerned with everything that would achieve high rank and prosperity for Bahrain.

It is for all this that the first relief came with this interview that AL-ADWA' conducted with His Excellency al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Mubarak Al Khalifa, the minister of foreign affairs.

Gulf, Arab Solidarity Affirmed

Manama AL-ADWA' in Arabic 17 Jan 81 p 3

[Text] An interview with His Excellency al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Mubarak Al Khalifa opens vast prospects for optimism and visions to anyone who is interviewing him. This is because his excellency's great experience, his broad outlook and his quiet, purposeful diplomacy can enrich one's information. In addition, such qualities do not dim the hopes or limit the aspirations of the masses to broad visions and pictures of wealth that produce a multitude of radiant hopes which allow one to soar beyond the events.

[Question] The dialogue about the return of parliamentary life in Bahrain was spirited for a while; then it cooled and ceased. What is your

excellency's opinion of the reasons behind the suspension of this dialogue? Your excellency had been one of the first to inspire hopes and to turn on the green light regarding the possibility that parliamentary life in Bahrain would soon be restored on new foundations. What are the foundations that your excellency considers suitable for this return and for involvement in a new participatory experiment?

[Answer] I do not believe that the dialogue about parliamentary life in Bahrain has ever stopped. The discussion about it may sometimes increase; other times it may be slight because political development is one of the subjects that is always being discussed in societies that have attained a specific stage of political and cultural maturity. Therefore, one does find that this subject is being discussed in Bahrain and in many countries of the world.

Therefore, I am following with interest what is being written about this subject in AL-ADWA' or in the other local newspapers. The discussion about parliamentary life will continue with us and with those who will come after us because this is a part of the evolution of man, even in societies that have attained deep-rooted and effective parliamentary experiments.

With regard to the restoration of parliamentary life in the second question, I believe that it is the subject of political participation that is essential. There is agreement about this subject, but the timing depends on the attainment of formulas that are receptive to growth after the previous experiment in Bahrain and the Arab experiments in the Arab homeland which culminated with single-party parliaments.

There is no ready answer to the subject of basic foundations and mainstays upon which the new experiment will be based. There are rather several individual judgments and opinions on that matter. I am quite confident that these will emerge at the suitable time.

The Opinions of Foreign Thinkers

[Question] Your excellency must have read Dr Emile Nakhlah's statements which AL-ADWA' published. Was he accurate when he attributed the reasons for the failure of Bahrain's parliamentary experiment to the fact that the rulers of the region were disturbed by the winds of political change that were blowing over Bahrain?

[Answer] The opinions that are proposed by some thinkers, and especially those who are strangers to the region in their thoughts, their imaginations and even in their emotions, reflect in many cases opinions that contain many concepts that are far from the real world. There is much evidence of this, such as the studies that are prepared by institutes specializing in the Middle East question. Ultimately, we find these subjects to be remote from the real world and biased to one particular party or trend.

My objective in saying so is not to criticize one person in particular, but this is rather a general impression. Our efforts in Bahrain are based on the reality we are experiencing and on our special surroundings which differ from those of any other region in the world.

The democratic experiment in Bahrain had many positive factors as well as negative factors. We must therefore benefit from those positive and negative factors in devising a new experiment that can grow and survive.

The proposal of such a subject as an immediate political slogan may not be as easily retracted as the subsidies for food, or, in other words, the daily questions on which we can change our positions by increasing or decreasing [our support] whenever we wish to do so. Therefore, when this matter is investigated, we must focus on the establishment of enduring political conditions that are receptive to growth and are not experimental.

Political Institutions in the Region

[Question] You did assert in your statement, which was published by the Kuwaiti newspaper, AL-QABAS and by other Arab newspapers, that the participatory institutions were being discussed among the Gulf states. Has the time come to publish the proceeds of this dialogue, especially since the time for the establishment of these institutions in Kuwait is approaching?

[Answer] I am one of those who has always believed that political institutions in the region must be "approximate" and not necessarily "identical." This is because a great difference between the kinds of political institutions would be reflected on all kinds of economic and political relations. I am confident that serious effort and continuous determination will ultimately lead us to this view that I am assuming is realistic. It is not possible for dissimilar political regimes to work seriously together.

[Question] It has now been confirmed that there is a Kuwaiti plan to establish a Gulf League similar to the Arab League. Does Bahrain envision success for this new experiment?

[Answer] There is not and there must not be more than one league in the Arab world: that is the Arab League. Coordination among league members is desirable and stipulated by the charter of the league. What is happening on the Gulf scene is action to coordinate [efforts for] economic, cultural and industrial integration and to coordinate efforts in other areas which none of the Gulf states can carry out by unilaterally. If each state could carry out these efforts separately, none can succeed unless such efforts are made on the grounds of regional participation or participation on the Arab scene in general.

We in Bahrain believe in and are making every effort to work for the

establishment of a framework for cooperation and constructive effort for the Arab Gulf states so they can face the challenges of the future as a group. There is no place in the near or in the distant future for anything other than collective action; there is no place for unilateral action. Our brothers in Kuwait have made major efforts for the success of this rapprochement.

An Important Step

It pleases me to indicate that an important step will be made early next month in the area of coordination and cooperation between these countries. We consider this step to be the crystallization of the ideas and feelings which we have been advocating for many years. We are hoping this will be a real step of change that will realize the hopes of the people of the area in fruitful cooperation.

[Question] What in your excellency's opinion is the alternative to the Camp David Accords with the new U.S. administration coming into office and assuming the kind of effective international politics on the scene of its free world? So far two of the three figures who forged the Camp David accords have dropped out of the picture. Do you believe that the change of faces is required by the circumstances of the new stage for a U.S. solution to the Middle East question?

[Answer] Regarding these two questions the Arab position on this matter is clear to anyone who wants to contribute to the peace process in the Middle East. The Arabs had announced before the Camp David Accords and after the accords that there could not be a permanent and a just peace in the Middle East without the Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab lands, and especially the Holy City of Jerusalem, and without self-determination for the Palestinian people, including their right to establish their independent state on their national soil. There must not be a unilateral solution, as was the case with Camp David.

A Unified Arab Position

But this cannot be achieved without a unified Arab position in the face of all the countries that support the Zionist enemy. The current Arab situation does not strengthen the trend for which we are working: the unity of the Arab rank to debate all the countries of the world, including the new U.S. administration which can contribute to the peace process more than any other country. Therefore, a united and a firm Arab position is the principal weapon [to be used] in wresting Arab rights. Otherwise, the unilateral Camp David approach will, God forbid, be victorious in the future. And this is what we fear.

[Question] 'Inan al-Safadi, the correspondent for the Israeli newspaper, THE JERUSALEM POST, published a report affirming that there was a [power] struggle in Egypt between al-Sadat and his vice president, Husni Mubarak and that the United States was supporting the second but that Israel

preferred keeping al-Sadat. Does your excellency believe that there is any truth to this view?

[Answer] I have no specific information about this subject. Therefore, I cannot express an opinion on it, especially since this is a domestic matter.

The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

[Question] The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the threat it posed to western interests, particularly U.S. interests in the region, was supposed to have forced the United States to make any attempt to propose a solution to the crisis or to the Middle East question that would please the Arabs so it can rely on them and guarantee their cooperation with it in warding off the Soviet threat. However, what occurred is the opposite of this. The United States is trying to make the countries of the area believe that the Soviet threat is more dangerous to them than the Zionist threat. Accordingly, a solution to the Arabs' primary cause would come second. How would your excellency explain the U.S. position?

[Answer] In my view the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is one of the most important events of this age inasmuch as it represents a return to the old colonialist policy that is called "gun boat policy." This means a policy of [using] the guns on boats. It means that the bigger countries would occupy the smaller countries by force and would impose the person and the regime they want. Therefore, the entire world has opposed this principle, especially when a superpower claims that it is fighting imperialism and intervention by western colonialist countries in the affairs of other countries and even communist countries like China, Yugoslavia and Romania.

This is regarding principle. With regard to the security of the area, we reject the notion of having the neighboring countries turned into colonized countries occupied by superpowers which run them as they wish and amass their forces on our borders. This would constitute a threat to the region from a superpower after the evacuation of the British forces from the region. It is this too that encouraged the United States to amass its navy fleets in the Arabian Sea, close to us. Thus the international struggle gets to take place around us or rather very close to us. The Zionist threat, however, is a completely different subject as far as substance is concerned. It is a cultural and a human struggle between colonization forces that have made a people homeless and caused them to flee their land and their soil, replacing them with elements that emigrated from all over the world. The essence of the struggle here differs from one location to another.

For this reason, the U.S. position is concerned first with stopping the Soviet encroachment from advancing anywhere in the world, but especially in the regions that are sensitive and important to western interests, and we know this. Therefore, our position on the U.S. support for the Israeli

position is flawless. Our position on that was affirmed by the numerous Arab summit meetings. The escalation of the struggle for the restoration of Arab rights is continuing with greater intensity. But this should not prevent us from speaking up clearly against Soviet intervention in the affairs of an independent, Muslim, sovereign state that is a member of the non-aligned organization [of nations].

The People of the Region Are Its Best Defenders

[Question] In an interview we had with Dr Emile Nakhlah, part of which was published by the English language GULF DAILY NEWS, and it was published in detail by AKHBAR AL-KHALIL, Dr Nakhlah emphasized that it would be impossible to defend the Gulf against a Soviet invasion if the United States did not acquire facilities in the region as well as means for storing weapons. What does your excellency think about such an affirmation?

[Answer] Our opinion on this was announced by all the officials in the region: the people of the region are its best defenders. Therefore, we do not need to heat up the region and give the superpowers an excuse to interfere and to confront each other. The Americans would like to have permanent bases in our region; therefore, coordination in the Gulf and good cooperation with the superpowers would be the response to everyone who has ambitions in the region.

[Question] What are your excellency's expectations about the success or the failure of the next Islamic summit conference, especially since Iran has announced that it would not attend the conference as long as the question of ending the Iraqi-Iranian struggle remained the foremost question on the agenda of the conference?

[Answer] First of all, Iran has not made an official announcement that it would not attend the conference: it has not notified the secretariat of the conference. It is known that intense efforts are being made to affirm that the neighboring state of Iran will attend the conference.

Second, we have much hope that this conference, which is the third summit for Islamic countries, will produce a political organization that would work for Muslims and contribute effectively so that peace would prevail in the countries of the world. We hope it would be a non-aligned organization, with everything that word means and implies. Such an organization would be capable of assuming positive positions vis a vis the challenges that the Third World faces from the superpowers. The question of the Middle East and the question of Palestine are vital examples of western bias for the Zionist colonialism in Arab lands. In this respect, it is like the Russian invasion of Afghanistan which represents Soviet colonialist ambitions to occupy the land of others, contrary to all international pacts and practices.

The third Islamic summit conference will express the conscience of Muslims and the conscience of the world in general more precisely and truthfully. This conference will face another important point: this is the

question of the Iraqi-Iranian struggle. Iraq and Iran are two fraternal Islamic countries, and the conferees must devise special and urgent considerations to achieve progress and relieve the tension between the two neighboring countries, thereby ending this dispute that ultimately does not serve the interests of the two countries or the interests of Muslims.

It is indisputable that convening the conference in the Holy Land will give the conference a spiritual and political thrust that no Islamic conference has had in the past.

I am confident that the fraternal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is hosting this conference will play a fundamental role in making the actions of the conference successful and in achieving satisfactory and beneficial results that would crown the goals and the aspirations of the conference.

8592

CSO: 4802

PARTY ORGAN CONDEMNS TERRORISM

Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 22 Feb 81 p 2

[Editorial]

[Text]

THE MORNING DAILY, JOMHURI ESLAMI, the newspaper of the Islamic Republic Party, in an article entitled "Terrorism, the club of imperialism," which appeared in its last issue, commented on the recent incidents at political meetings which have been attacked by club-wielding hooligans. The article said:

"There is no doubt that the nature of the Islamic Revolution of Iran is opposed to club-wielding and coercive methods. This Revolution not only rejects such methods as a means of attaining its goals but it highly values the intellect, the spirit and thinking. The Islamic Revolution rejected all childish methods of 'relying on weapons' and solution of problems at 'gun point'. Every one knows that the spiritual demeanor of the leadership, combined with an enlightened public, cannot be reconciled with the application of force and hooliganism. In addition, any act of assassination, terrorism and torture contradicts our ideology especially its principles of preaching and invitation and so must be regarded as invalid.

Since its inception the Islamic Revolution of Iran has suffered severe blows from such cowardly, inhuman and anti-Islamic actions. The martyrdom of Ayatollah Motaheri and Hojatoleslam Mofatteh at the hands of a bunch of outwardly human looking beasts and numerous other plots against the Ulama, show that United States Imperialism and the agents of the superpowers have started to strengthen terrorism as a means of bringing about disorder, chaos and subversion thereby seeking to weaken the pillars of the Republic and to destroy the true servants of Islam and the Revolution.

Examples of this have been seen in recent months in Mashad, Isfahan, Tehran and Qom. The Kuchefahan incident last week (in which Hojatoleslam Lahooti, a Majlis deputy, was attacked by hooligans) cannot be considered unrelated to the aforementioned chain of plots and conspiracies."

The article, while lauding the stance taken by Hojatoleslam Syed Ahmad Khomeini (son of Imam Khomeini,

who protested the Kuchefahan incident), asked the latter why he did not complain at the disgraceful events in Mashad or when an attempt was made against the life of public prosecutor Ayatollah Musavi Ardebili nor did the President send a letter of sympathy when these events occurred, as he had done in the case of the abortive attack against Lahooti, and why did the numerous attempts on the life of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Ayatollah Beheshti, not prompt such expressions of sympathy? asked the article.

In conclusion Jomhuri Islami's article expressed the hope that Ahmad Khomeini as a sign of respect for the blood of 70 thousand martyrs and the more than 100 thousand people crippled in the course of the Revolution, would be henceforth more impartial in his protests against mairdeeds, in which case the newspaper would undoubtedly support him.

CSO: 4920

MINING MINERALS SEEN AS OFFSET TO OIL LOSSES

Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 21 Feb 81 p 2

[Editorial]

[Text] THE FINANCIAL DAILY BOURSE in its leading article Thursday commented on the role of the mines in the economy of the country and added that unfortunately as a result of numerous problems mineral extraction had been going through a period of stagnation. Due to the importance of mines it was decided to establish a Ministry of Mines, however, such a decision has so far not been implemented.

It is obvious that the exploitation of copper, coal, uranium, iron ore, lead and many other minerals that are abundant in the country and are needed by domestic industries, could boost the country's economy.

In addition to minerals exploited in a proper manner, large amounts of ore could be exported which would bring in large amounts of foreign exchange.

It should be kept in mind that exploitation of natural resources calls for heavy investment and the main idea behind nationalization of mines is that due to the high costs of excavation and exploitation of the mines they must be financed and maintained as a national resource.

Bourse pointed out that all of the mine deposits of the country have not yet been identified, although studies and investigations have been carried out in this respect, there is still need for further studies so that the location and amount of reserves of all mineral resource, would be identified.

Due to the fact that our natural gas and oil reserves have a limited life span and someday will be exhausted therefore, other minerals and natural resources, which so far have been neglected, could play a great role in the country's economy and especially during the time that there will be no more oil. In order to minimize excavation expenditures it will be better to give such tasks to the Ministry of Oil.

The article concluded by saying that because of the abundance of natural resources and minerals in the country, this sector should be developed along side industries and agriculture. And for this there must be properly drawn up plans.

CSO: 4920

MINISTRY PLANS NEW AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 22 Feb 81 p 2

[Editorial]

[Text]

The economic daily Bourse in its lead article on Thursday evaluated the new bill for the delineation of agricultural districts. The article quoting the Majlis Speaker Hujatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, said that the new bill would clarify the state of land ownership and naturally this would put an end to various ambiguities and differences that currently prevail in this respect. In the past, the article added, these differences and ambiguities have been the main stumbling block in the path of agricultural development in Iran.

The land distribution scheme which was intended to encourage the farmers in their agricultural activity, failed to bear the desired results. In practice it intensified and widened the differences among the farmers, most of whom had abandoned their lands and went to the cities in search of better earnings. In Iran, with ample areas of cultivable land, such problems should not arise provided that a sound plan is devised and implemented for the development of farmlands, provision of irrigation water and supply of improved seeds and fertilizers to needy farmers.

For this purpose the Ministry of Agriculture has drawn up projects for the creation of agricultural districts in the same way that it has established industrial districts in some parts of the country. The designated industrial districts were provided with all the necessary facilities such as land, water, electricity, gas and other amenities for the development of factories or industrial establishments. In the case of agricultural districts the government should find suitable plots of lands, and build feeder roads to be connected to the main roads so that the farmers may be able to market their products easily. These agricultural districts can be opened up to interested farmers through rural cooperative societies or plots in them directly sold to individual farmers. In this way there will no longer be any room for discord and differences among the farmers. The creation of agricultural districts can also be undertaken by the private sector on the condition that this sector is content with a fair margin of profit and does not indulge in land

speculation and profiteering. This is where the Ministry of Agriculture should decide how far it could carry out this project directly or how far it wants to delegate the task to the private sector. The Ultimate aim, however, is to revive Iranian agriculture and increase its productivity so that the country may become self-sufficient in the near future, concluded the article.

JAMAHIRIYAH STUDENTS HOLD CONGRESS

Paris BULLETIN QUOTIDIEN DE L'AGENCE JAMAHIRIYA-PRESSE in French 8 Feb 81 pp 9-11

[Jamahiriya News Agency report on 8 February (3 Rabi al Thani) from Benghazi: "Fifth Congress of Jamahiriya Students"]

[Text] The leader of the Great Revolution of 1 September took part in some of the proceedings of the 5th congress of Jamahiriya students which started yesterday evening at Gar Younes University, its theme being "Students, instruments of the revolution," "instruments of unity and progress."

Also taking part in this congress are student delegations from friendly countries, the secretary for trade union, association and union affairs from the People's General Congress, and the secretary of the Popular High Committee of Gar Younes University.

In his speech during the opening meeting, the secretary of the Student Congress of Gar Younes University started out by welcoming the delegations, organizations and fellow student unions taking part in the congress during which resolutions from the grass roots student congresses will be reviewed.

The secretary of the student congress said that every day he was more convinced that congresses and popular committees, and unions, trade unions and professional associations are the only means through which the masses can have control over their lives, and that without that there would be nothing more than trickery and demagoguery.

He also said that the student masses have continuously taken splendid revolutionary initiatives, and that they are in the forefront of the movement of the masses to overcome obstacles and destroy dictatorial power at the grass roots level. He went on to say that students are quite freely and unrestrainedly deciding to move from the stage of idleness and conservatism to that of production and awakening. They are deciding as well to take up arms and to transform their educational institutions into military barracks to hasten the time when there is an armed population and to move to a counterattack mode. They are also deciding to revolutionize their programs in order to abolish the traditional systems which prevail in education, and this is so they can better further the revolutionary transformation of the masses.

The secretary of the student congress also asserted that the student masses are worthy of the trust placed in them by the Great Revolution of 1 September. They have gone far beyond all the systems of representation which are such a hoax for

student masses elsewhere in the world, and they are issuing an implicit challenge to Arab and other students. They wanted to have the experience of being student masses in a Jamahiriyah inspired by the Green Book, which has reviewed all human experience with an eye to democracy, and in order to be finally done with all forms of supervision, representation, delegation of authority, and takeover.

Speaking in his turn, the steering committee secretary of the Jamahiriyah General Student Union explained the attitudes of the student masses and their refusal to be traitors and slaves. The demonstrations in 1958 and 1961, which were led by Mu'ammarr Qadhafi, then a student, were already an expression of the students rejecting the oppression and dictatorship which characterized the system of government in place at the time. They were motivated by a nationalist sentiment which supported the revolutionaries in Algeria and everywhere in Arab areas and in Africa. They took a stand favoring unity and against separatism, contrary to the leanings of the tottering monarchical regime, which was tied to colonialism and fixed on regionalism, thereby attempting to save itself and to isolate the Arab people of Libya from the other children of the Arab nation.

The demonstrations in January and June of 1964 were a continuation of the demonstrations led by Mu'ammarr Qadhafi as a student in 1958 and 1961 and were premonitory signs of the revolution.

9631

CSO: 4800

ELECTRICITY PROJECTS MOVE AHEAD

Paris BULLETIN QUOTIDIEN DE L'AGENCE JAMAHIRIYA-PRESSE in French 9 Feb 81 pp 10-11

[Jamahiriya News Agency report on 8 February (3 Rabi' al Akher) from Tripoli: "Developments in Electricity"]

[Text] Work is currently underway on the construction of six power plants at El Khams, El Zouitina, Zouara, El Aril, El Sarir, and Sebha, to have a total capacity of 40,810 megawatts.

There is also work underway to increase capacity at the Tobruk, Derna and northern Benghazi plants by 360 megawatts according to General Popular Committee for electricity sources. Work is currently in full swing to provide the 220-volt branch line network with 1734 km of extension so that it can cover 780 km of the Tarhouna and El Khams regions.

Work on this project will probably be completed during this year as probably will be the 790-km El Khams-Muserata line and the 100-km Chakchouk Nalout line. The line joining West Tripoli and Hira is 42 km long.

The one from El Khams, from the transformer station at El Khams, goes 32 km to the east and west of Tripoli.

Electricity Secretariat sources say that twelve 200-kw transformer stations are being built at Zamzam, Syrte Ajdabia, El Tamini, Al Barika, El Saraj, Ain Zara, Nalout, Al Kara Bouli, Mrada, El Khams, and Muserata. They are scheduled to be completed in 1981 or 1982.

The same sources add that preparations are in full swing to reach the last stage in the construction of 1329 km of branchline networks to have 66-kw capacity, 335 km in the Nalout and Ghadames regions, 110 km in Tobruk and El Bardia, 22 km in Syrte Ras Lanouf, 18 km in Bani Walid Abou Grin, 130 km in Abi-Alkir El Chhouiref, the Wadi Nina/Houn line of 350 km and the Bani Walid Mezda line of 260 km.

Work is also underway on the construction of nine power plants to provide 66 kw to Naout, Sinanoun, Darj, Ghadamis, Ghadamis Airport, Sultan Benjouad Ras Lanouf, and the east part of Syrte. Work is likewise underway on the construction of four plants at El Khams, Znara, Mlita and El Zouitina for sea water desalinization with a capacity for putting out 181 cubic meters a day, and on the expansion of the Derna plant.

Furthermore, work on the second section of the power plant at El Khams will start during the course of this year and will finish in 1985-1986. The plant's capacity at the completion of the first and second sections will reach 960 kw. It is one of the largest power plants in the Jamahiriyah.

Work on the "El Zouitla" power plant will be finished in 1987-1988 [as published].

9631

CSO: 4800

MODEL VILLAGE PROJECT

Paris BULLETIN QUOTIDIEN DE L'AGENCE JAMAHIRIYA PRESSE in French 5 Feb 81 pp 5-6

[Jamahiriya News Agency report on 5 February (30 Rabial Awal): "Construction of a Model Village as Part of the Maknoussa Agricultural Project"]

[Text] The General Popular Committee for Housing is going to sign a contract with an international company specializing in construction to build a model village project at Maknoussa. The project includes 200 residential units, a dispensary, a primary school with 12 classrooms, a market, a mosque, a gas station, an administrative complex, a bus station, a piped water system, sewers, a network of roads, and water reservoirs.

This process has gotten underway on the authorization of the General Popular Committee and in accordance with the recommendations and resolutions of the Popular Congresses.

It has been learned from General Popular Committee for Housing sources that the village is for the agricultural project workers who are part of the grain production project in the region.

It should be noted that the implementation of the Maknoussa agricultural project, whose 2,400-hectare area is divided into 40-hectare fields, started in 1978.

In 1979 and 1980 the project managed to produce 12,178 tons of wheat, which is equivalent to 5.1 per hectare. This yield is considered one of the highest in the Sahara's agricultural regions. An area of nearly 1,800 hectares is slated for summer crops.

Nearly 60 wells for irrigation have already been sunk as part of this project. Each well has a flow rate of 150 cubic meters of water per hour.

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CSO: 4800

SYRIA

SOVIET EXPERTS CONDUCT PANEL ON THWARTING AMERICAN AIMS IN REGION

Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 6, 13, 29 Jan 81

[Article: "The Round Table: Toward Continued and Strengthened Friendship and Cooperation between Syrian Arab Republic and Soviet Union"]

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[Text] In the symposium on Syrian Arab-Soviet relations, and in other subsequent symposia, AL-BA'TH has aspired to emerge a little from its parochialism at a time which it is preparing itself to achieve further development and progress in the level of journalistic material and in forms for presenting it.

If the symposium on Soviet-Syrian Arab relations has been the entree to a subsequent series of dialogues and presentation of friendly ideas supportive of the Arab position and just struggle, that is because our relations with the Soviet Union have come in recent moments to possess a special character which has been imposed by a long experience of cooperation and mutual trust on numerous political, economic and military horizons.

The Soviet comrades participating in the symposium cast light on the history of that relationship and analyze the stages of its escalation and development in the same spirit of friendship which embraces the two friendly peoples in Syria and the Soviet Union. Perhaps the real golden age has been that in which the comrade and fighting man Hafiz al-Asad, secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and president, has led the stage of Syrian political action, in which the features of this special character to which we referred have become apparent at a time in which the imperialist onslaught in the Arab region and along its borders, led by the United States of America, has reached a serious limit with which the issue of restoring balance to the forces in the region has become a matter of utmost importance.

The treaty of friendship and cooperation between Syria and the Soviet Union has taken place to this end, and it is for this reason that the intrigues of the adversary are growing in the face of it.

AL-BA'TH's Correspondent: We have called for this meeting in order thoroughly to study the real nature and the development of relations between the two friendly countries of Syria and the Soviet Union. These relations have always, in their historic course, represented a rising curve and today are achieving a qualitative strategic turning point, inaugurated by the treaty of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

At the beginning, let us orient ourselves toward history. Orientation toward history is the cornerstone of any scientific discussion of platforms. In this endeavor, let us try to rely on a stage-by-stage time breakdown of these relations, from the early moments of our era to today.

Could Comrade Fomin inaugurate our round table discussions?

Fomin: Let me begin the discussion on this issue. The other comrades, most of whom have been in Syria and can enrich the discussion with their impressions and personal observations, can follow up.

We in the Soviet Union have always been in sympathy with Syria, and our friendship and sympathy with you have been known throughout history. Old Russia cooperated with Syria in the past in the cultural field, especially through the well known activity of the Russian-Palestinian Society on the territory of Syria and Lebanon (as it is called now), and to this day buildings remain in some areas of Syria which were built in their time by Russian Orthodox missionaries, who taught the Syrians the Russian language and other pedagogical matters. Today in Syria you can find some people who studied in those schools.

In the Soviet Union, we appreciate Syria's great contribution to world civilization and its qualitative weight in the national liberation movement of the Arab people as a whole. It is the Syrians, specifically, who began to expel the Crusaders from Arab territory, and they were in fact expelled from it. Afterward, Syria embarked on a merciless struggle against French colonialism and French imperialism. Syria today is considered a pioneer in the field of the development of Soviet-Arab relations, and I would like in general to refer to the fact that since the beginning ours have been model exemplary relations, and this good beginning has been reflected subsequently on the overall development of our friendly relations.

I believe that we can try to divide the history of Soviet-Syrian relations into a number of stages, starting with the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in July 1944 and going up to today.

However, it is worth our while first to pause a moment before the great October socialist revolution. This revolution was the prelude to and the beginning of Soviet-Arab relations in general.

I consider that the Orientalist scholar Comrade Lebedev is the best one to talk to us on this subject, because of his broad knowledge of it; after that, we can move on to the stage-by-stage categorization of our relations with Syria in particular.

Lebedev: At the start of my intervention, it is necessary to point out that the thoughts of the great freedom-loving October socialist revolution spread rapidly over all corners of the Arab world. A great revolution-inspiring effect was made on the Arab people by the Leninist decree on peace which exposed the policy of imperialist degradation and called for the principle of the free and independent evolution of all peoples. The same effect was made by the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which called for the peoples' rights and freedoms to determine their destiny and the abrogation of concessions and complications.

The appeal of the People's Delegated Council to all Moslem Working People in Russia and the East, which Lenin signed and which spoke of the inviolability and freedom of the national and cultural beliefs, customs and institutions of the Moslems, was translated into Arabic and met with a wide echo and great support on the part of the Arabs.

The Soviet government's exposure of the secret agreements signed by the imperialist countries in 1916 on the subdivision of areas of influence in the Arab East enjoyed great importance; the Soviet government thus warned the Arabs of the danger threatening them, and the publication of the provisions of the treaty was an incentive for the continued escalation of the struggle against colonialism thereafter.

Thus the great Arab world rose up to struggle for the sake of a new life and social progress and against colonial imperialist enslavement of peoples.

In the new historic circumstances created by the October revolution, it was no longer possible for the imperialist countries overtly to occupy the Arab lands which before 1918 were under the dominance of the colonial empire. Therefore they invented a new form for enslaving peoples which they termed the mandate system.

By delegation of the League of Nations, England imposed its "protection" on Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan, and France imposed its "protection" on Syria and Lebanon. The United States benefited from the open door policy in these regions placed under the mandate.

The Soviet government stood as a resolute adversary of the mandate system, and that is the position which it expressed more than once in its successive diplomatic memoranda to international conferences. Even when the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934, it stressed its firm position regarding Article 22 of the league charter, which summarized the basic provisions of the mandate system.

Although, in the period between the two wars, the Soviet Union was the only socialist country in the world, and for a number of objective reasons was not able to offer material assistance to the Arab liberation movement, the Soviet Union offered great political support to this movement and led the campaign to defend the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa and support their just struggle against imperialist settlement and colonial exploitation. The Soviet Union exposed to the whole world the imperialist countries' conspiracies aimed at incorporating the Arab countries into their areas of influence, usurping their resources and using them for the purposes of their personal benefit.

The foreign political steps which the Soviet Union took on behalf of the Arab countries in the stage between the two world wars continuously helped develop and strengthen the position of the domestic national forces. The ^[line missing] belief of the Arab revolutionaries in the correctness of the road they had chosen grew, the forces which prepared the circumstances for liquidating the

colonial methods of administration ripened in the Arab world, and the preliminaries were prepared for the renaissance of the Arab nation in the future.

Pomin: Let me follow up on my discussion, if you will permit me, on the stage-by-stage breakdown of relations between our two countries and pause briefly at the first stage, or, more correctly, at the threshold of the first stage.

In the wake of self-sacrificing national struggle which the Syrian Arab people embarked on against colonialism, France, in 1943, approved the independence of Syria, and as of 1 January 1944 transferred the powers of the mandate authorities to the Syrian government, promising to withdraw its armies.

After World War Two had come to an end, Syria, emulated by Lebanon, demanded immediate evacuation of foreign armies from its territories and since it did not receive a satisfactory answer, the governments of Syria and Lebanon ventured to appeal to the United Nations organization for a ruling on the subject of the dispute. The complaint of Syrian and Lebanon was discussed in the Security Council on 15 and 16 February 1946 and the representatives of Britain and France declared that the time had not yet come for the withdrawal of their armies from Syria and Lebanon.

The representative of the Soviet Union supported the demand of Syria and Lebanon and demanded the withdrawal of the foreign forces from their territories at once. However, the Security Council did not accept this demand. After that, the representative of the United States spoke, supporting the representatives of the two colonial countries and the countries linked to them. He presented the draft of a resolution according to which France and Britain would essentially be able to delay on the matter of the withdrawal of the forces or demand compensation for the withdrawal of their forces in the form of unequal waivers, concessions, agreements and so forth.

The Soviet delegate opposed the draft resolution the Americans presented, using the right of the veto, and the draft was therefore considered rejected by the Security Council. Ultimately, England and France agreed to accept the Soviet offer to negotiate with Syria and Lebanon to determine dates and means for withdrawing the forces, and negotiations actually did take place in March of that year in Paris, concluding with the signing of a number of agreements, by virtue of one of which the last French soldier was withdrawn from Syrian soil on 16 April 1946.

Thus Soviet diplomacy played a positive role in ridding Syria of the presence of the imperialist occupation in its territories, and the Syrian people still remember that and thank the Soviet people for their support.

The first stage began, then, with the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, as we mentioned above, in 1944, and made itself manifest with Soviet diplomacy's support for the cause of Syrian independence in the United Nations organization and in its institutions.

In the fifties a new stage appeared; this stage extended to 1963, when the following stage began, with the arrival of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party to power and

the isolation of feudal and bourgeois circles from the regime. Naturally a quantum leap occurred in our relations during this period. After that there came 23 November 1966. [Two lines missing here.] Here relations between our two countries developed in a more general, comprehensive fashion, and a start was made on the establishment of massive joint economic projects, in particular the Euphrates Dam.

Then after that a new stage was witnessed, accompanying the establishment of the Corrective Movement under the leadership of President Hafiz al-Asad, secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, on 16 November 1970. This movement declared itself to be a continuation and extension of the 23 February movement.

In the 10 years which followed the Corrective Movement, our relations continued to develop increasingly; these relations have been crowned in the current stage by the signing of the treaty of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

These are the most important stages which our relations have gone through, in my opinion, and, if we agree on that, we can go into detailed discussion of any stage we deem it appropriate to place under the microscope of analysis and thorough study.

AL-BA'TH's correspondent: This is an acceptable point of view to us all, because it proceeds from a clear comprehension of the historic characteristics of the development of the two countries, and determines the prominent events in the life of our Syrian Arab nation basically in the establishment of the time framework of each stage. If we are agreed in our opinions on this stage-by-stage classification, let us continue by hearing the opinion of Prof Oganesyan, in the context of whose scholarly research enter the issues of the development of Syria and the Arab liberation movement.

Oganesyan: I believe that this stage-by-stage breakdown is acceptable, as it relies on specific historic facts. One can actually consider the beginning of the first stage of Soviet relations to be 1944, that is, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, but I consider that we should expand this stage to 1958, before Syria's inclusion in the United Arab Republic. This stage is characterized by the fact that our relations existed with an independent Syrian state but that the power at that time was concentrated in the hands of the feudal bourgeoisie, which left its mark on our relations. Here I mean that mutual economic relations occupied the prime position in our overall relations; as far as political relations went, they assumed a simplified form, appearing in the form of political moral support we offered to Syria so that it could preserve and consolidate its independence. Here we should single out for mention the stage of the fifties and the challenges in the years 1956 and 1957, when the Western countries' pressures on Syrian became intensified. In this process, they used Turkey and some puppet regimes; however, these pressures stopped with Syria's departure from the United Arab Republic and the secession period began, lasting for a relatively short period, up to 1963. At that time our relations were roughly marked by the same character with which they had been marked before the establishment of the United Arab Republic.

However, everything changed on 8 March 1963, when the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party took over the reins of power. We know that the history of Syria is replete with military coups, to the point where the year 1949 alone witnessed three military coups. However, this time the matter did not resemble a military coup — rather, there was a revolution, and there was a qualitatively new situation in Syria, meaning, exactly, that forces expressing the interests of the popular masses had come to power for the first time. Therefore, the nature of Soviet-Syrian relations immediately changed in a noticeable fashion.

While the basic content before this period was restricted to economic cooperation, as I noted above, the situation has now changed: political relations have come to occupy the primary place, and this tendency was strengthened after 23 February 1966 when the left-wing democratic tendency triumphed, particularly after 16 November 1970.

Here, we observe a purely new stage which we had not previously experienced in the history of Soviet-Syrian relations. The distinguishing feature of this stage was the establishment of relations between the two parties, the Soviet Communist Party and the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, alongside political, government and economic relations; this in fact was a new turning point. Relations between our two parties give our relations a more stable character, giving them the incentive to continue and develop in an amazing fashion.

In reality, the seventies constitute a new, distinctive stage in the history of our relations, since it is manifestly clear here that all the links in the relationships between the two countries, be they political, governmental or economic, are continuously working. This includes cooperation in the military field, where the Soviet Union is providing aid to Syria to stand up against the neo-Nazis and American imperialism, and there are many items of evidence — the June 1967 war, then the October 1973 war. Syria, thanks to the support of the Soviet Union, was able, just as 'Abd-al-Nasir's Egypt previously had been able, to strike out at the strategic goals which the United States and Israel had set forth in order to liquidate the progressive regimes in the Arab east. However, these objectives were not realized, and the two fighting countries managed to defend their peoples' social and economic achievements.

The just October war of liberation deserves a long, contemplative pause.

AL-BA'TH's correspondent: The Russian maxim which holds "It is better that you should see once than that you should hear a hundred times" is apropos. We have an Arabic maxim which says "Your close neighbor, not your distant brother."

From the wisdom of these two maxims, we may deduce the importance of an abstract examination of reality and a real intimate experience with events. Here it would be beneficial for us to hear the view of a distinguished observer who has visited our country more than once, in 1965, 1968, 1970, 1973 and 1977, living through the most important events going on in the current stage of the historic development of our country.

Could Comrade Koryavin discuss his views and impressions with us?

Koryavin: I am in agreement with my colleague Prof Oganesyan in his assertion that a qualitative new stage in our relations began with the 1966 celebration, and was basically focused in the establishment of the Corrective Movement in Syria in 1970. The truth is that the shadow of this movement has been felt in all fields and areas, including the military one.

Here talk about the military field is very important, since in the seventies and before, specifically in 1967 and 1973, Syria faced extremely grave trials, related in particular to the Israeli aggression.

We went through this stage as eyewitnesses and as journalists who have stayed for a long period in the Middle East. It had previously been fixed in our minds that Syria was a country where "changes in the guard" were constantly taking place, as we wrote -- that is, where governments were changing, coups followed one another periodically, and what one could consider the most important element in the development of any country, stability, was absent.

However, matters were turned on their head with the 1966 celebration, in major form after 1970, when the most important element with which the situation in Syria could be characterized became its domestic stability. Perhaps some phenomena of a purely temporary domestic nature occurred as regards Syria, but there remains the important thing, which is that the country has become more stable and confident of itself and of the power of its ability to stand up to aggression, and it began to stand in the first ranks of the national liberation movement.

Here I would like to go back a little and pause before the "oil issue" in Syria, which has absorbed my interest for a long time. It is well known that Syria's oil reserves are meager when compared with those of other Arab oil-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and other countries; however, that ceases to be the most important element when we shed light on the oil policy Syria has pursued. The most important element, in my opinion, is that the Syrian Arab Republic has been in the vanguard of those propounding the slogan "Arab oil for the Arabs," so that oil may be liberated from its subservience to the imperialist monopolies and so that oil may become a basic pillar for the development of the domestic economy and the development of the other productive sectors necessary for the establishment of a modern state, not just a means for devouring petrodollars.

Now, when I thumb through the books of my observations and writings, this "squabble" which took place between Syria and the Iraq Petroleum Company comes to my memory. At that time the newspaper FINANCIAL TIMES wrote, stating, in blunt phrases:

"Either the Syrian government agrees to the numbers which the Iraq Petroleum Company has imposed, or it must leave power." Imagine the tone with which a respected English newspaper was speaking in those years! However, I am confident that it cannot talk to Syria in that tone today, because Syria today is proceeding in the front ranks of the national liberation movement.

After that there occurred the June 1967 aggression, which explained the statement of the English newspaper; the strategic objective of that aggression actually was to bring down the progressive national regimes in the Arab world and tighten the

imperialist consortia's grip over the oil producing countries; however, none of that happened, and Syria emerged from this trial able to preserve its progressive transformations and its determined progress toward the construction of a new life. After that, other qualitative changes occurred in the Arab map, which can be the object of subsequent discussion and detailed analysis.

Participants in the Symposium

The academician Mikhail Kondakov, vice president of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Dr Oleg Pomin, Deputy Chairman of the Soviet-Syrian Friendship Society, doctor in the philosophy of history.

Prof Nikolai Gyanesyan, chief of Arab Countries Division, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet-Armenian Academy of Sciences, doctor in historical sciences.

The journalist, Leonid Rassadin, chief commentator of Moscow Radio.

Dr Yevgeniy Lebedev, Arab Countries Department chief, Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, doctor in the philosophy of history.

The journalist Leonid Koryavin, member of the editorial board of the newspaper IZVESTIA and head of the newspaper's Asian, African and Latin American countries section.

Igor Molchanov, chief of Arab Division of Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

[13 January 81 pp 7, 8]

In the first part of the AL-BATHI symposium, "the issue of Arab-Soviet relations, a model of international relations of a new kind," the development of relations between the two countries and their entry into the stage of diplomatic relations in 1944 were reviewed, along with the manner in which Britain imposed its "protection," by delegation from the League of Nations, over Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan, and France its "protection" over Syria and Lebanon, and the manner in which America proceeded with the open door policy. The Soviet government stood as a determined adversary of the mandate system.

The people taking part in the symposium discussed how relations entered into a new stage with the fifties, up to 1963, when the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party took over and the feudalists and reactionaries were isolated.

Relations proceeded in a direct fashion with the establishment of projects, but witnessed a new stage, which accompanied the Corrective Movement led by President Hafiz al-Asad, the secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, on 16 November 1970.

Relations in the 10 years following the Corrective Movement developed, until the current stage, in which the treaty of friendship and cooperation was signed by the two countries.

AL-BATH is publishing the second portion of the symposium, as stated in the words of the people taking part in it.

AL-BATH's correspondent: Let us now start with a discussion of a new subject, which, I believe, is the most important of the subjects this symposium is dealing with. We can say that it is the most important issue in the discussions of our "round table," and we would like to turn the tiller of the discussion toward the treaty of friendship and cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Soviet Union. I state that this treaty was not born by coincidence but that it was a logical result of the state of an advanced movement reflecting the flourishing relations between the two countries and the growth of friendship between the two peoples. Therefore, the mass receptiveness toward the treaty in our country was splendid; no sooner did President al-Asad return to the country after signing the treaty than he received hundreds of cables and letters blessing this great, historic achievement. The masses estraced this as one of the most important events in the recent era of our development and no event or occasion takes place in our country now in which the treaty is not mentioned closely or remotely. Thus the treaty has truly become a manifestation of friendship and the beginning of a new evaluation of our relations. Here we would like to deal with the contents and importance of the treaty through investigation, discussion and analysis. Let us start with the legal status of the treaty. It is necessary to point out that the treaty, as a legal form, is to be considered one of the most advanced forms of contractual relations between countries in the context of modern international relations. In its palpable legal significance, it is a charter which brings together two friendly countries and determines their joint desires and commitments in accordance with a declared treaty text.

Femin: If we talk in the language of international law, a treaty is generally a form for expressing will between two countries, or among a number of countries; here it is an action agreed upon between our two countries, the Soviet Union and Syria, regarding their joint rights and obligations in political, economic and other fields.

History is acquainted with two forms of treaty relations, treaties of equality and treaties of inequality, or treaties which are biased regarding the two contracting parties.

As regards the capitalist countries, when they signed international treaties, especially in the past, they tried to impose their desire and their terms on the "weaker" countries, according to the prevailing bourgeois expression. The Arab countries know this from experience, since history reminds us of many examples in which agreements biased against the rights of numerous Arab countries were imposed. Examples of this are the treaties whose contents were declared following the triumph of the great October socialist revolution, the Franco-Syrian treaty of 1936, the Franco-Lebanese treaty of the same year, and so forth.

Conversely, there is the treaty system of socialist countries which base their treaty relations on the sovereignty of both parties, on mutual benefits, and on nonintervention in one another's internal affairs. This has had a great effect on international practice in the field of treaty agreements, and in general, when

a capitalist country concludes a treaty today with a developing country, which to some degree is reasonable that is not happening in isolation from the effect of the existence of the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist system.

The Soviet-Syrian treaty is in agreement in letter and spirit with the constitutional and legislative systems of both countries. Agreement was made to it, and it was signed, during the visit by the secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the president of the Syrian Arab Republic, Hafiz al-Asad, to the Soviet Union; after that, the treaty was subjected to the legislative procedures in effect in both countries. On 14 November 1980 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet held a meeting chaired by Leonid Brezhnev, secretary general of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and approved the conclusion of the treaty, and Leonid Brezhnev signed the document on the conclusion. At this session the member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and minister of foreign affairs of the Soviet Union, Andrei Gromyko, spoke on behalf of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, which recommended that the treaty be concluded and stressed that the treaty was one of equality in all its aspects, was equally beneficial to the Soviet Union and the Syrian Arab Republic, and, in its totality, was in agreement with the constitution of the Soviet Union, the United Nations charter and the principle of peaceful constructive cooperation between peoples.

Stress was laid more than once during Comrade Hafiz al-Asad's visit to Moscow, and in the comments which followed the signing of the treaty, on the fact that it was a treaty in the name of peace and the liquidation of the abyss of armed struggle. However, what is essential here is that the talk revolve about a just peace; the treaty was signed for the sake of a just peace, and this is present in the minds of public opinion in all corners of the world.

Since our struggle has been the same, since we have, as people are accustomed to saying in Syria, been fighting in one trench against imperialism and Zionism, and since the Soviet Union is leading the struggle against imperialism and reaction all along the front, it is, at the same time, offering aid to Syria. When Syria wages the struggle against imperialism and Zionism, and stands in the vanguard of this struggle in the Middle East, it is making its contribution to the final triumph of the forces of socialism and social progress over the forces of imperialism and racism in their various manifestations and forms which are prejudiced against mankind.

Thus I can stress that this treaty, from the standpoint of international law, is an equal one of benefit to both parties.

Koryavin: I would like to talk about the strategic importance of this treaty and stress before all else the urgency of the treaty as far as the current international circumstances and its effect on them go. Above and beyond the fact that the treaty deals with the concerns of Syria and the Soviet Union, it is also to be considered, without a doubt, an element influencing the international situation as a whole. Why?

First, because it was concluded at a stage in which the international situation was increasing in gravity and complexity.

Second, because of the fact that the vital nature of the treaty stands out regarding issues of peace and security in the region.

If we study the provisions of the treaty closely, we will find that both contracting parties will by various means help consolidate world peace, the security of peoples and the relaxation of international tension. Stress is laid on this issue in Article Two of the treaty.

If we take Article Three, the two contracting parties proceed from the premise of belief in the equality of all peoples and countries, regardless of race and belief. They condemn imperialism, racism and Zionism as an embodiment of racism; the import of this article is of extreme significance, because we made a tour through history a short time ago and spoke about our war and your war, stressing, in the context of it, that many historic factors correspond in spite of the difficulty of comparison. Our emphasis on considering Zionism a form of racism and comparing it with the Hitlerite racist theory was not haphazard.

Here we also lay stress on the importance of the struggle against imperialism and the total and final liquidation of colonialism. We will soon be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the international declaration on the grant of independence to colonized peoples which, at its time, was a great event. Can you see how the map of the world has changed in 20 years and how the map of Asia and the maps of the other awakened continents have changed? African peoples accepted this declaration with great enthusiasm because it stressed the total liquidation of colonialism, and today the combatants of Namibia and the partisans of South Africa are fighting to this end for the sake of the freedom of their nations and the happiness of their peoples.

I do not want to stray from the focus of the matter, but I wanted to stress, through my previous review, that the treaty nonetheless is becoming an important factor which has its effect and its contribution in prompting and enlarging the processes of national liberation in the world.

It is necessary, finally, to pause before the importance of the treaty with respect to the situation in the Middle East. I can say that the treaty calls for a purification of the situation in this region, especially since the aggressive operations which Israel is carrying out against Lebanon are continuous and it is continuing to stress its expansionist aspirations, examples of which are the "incorporation" of Jerusalem and its overt talk about "incorporating" the Golan Heights, which they have planted with "green districts," with the intention of saying that they are staying on this territory. The farms which they have established there are not aimed at harvesting certain crops but are an implantation of the feet of aggression on the land of others. When we talk about that in our writings, we say that these cultivated areas do not symbolize land which has been bestowed but are signs of occupation of the Golan Heights.

There is also another matter, which is the Americans' attempt to consolidate their military presence in the area and warm their hands on the fire of the Iraq-Iranian conflict, a conflict which is of no benefit in terms of the theory of the process of national liberation, since it is directing forces in other than their proper directions and the muzzles of cannons are turning in an opposite direction. To

state it bluntly, both parties have tremendous resources which they have not mobilized against imperialism or for the sake of defending the area against designs; rather, these resources are being directed toward bloody destruction, although it would have been possible to unleash them into the current of the struggle against American infiltration — I am not saying for the sake of launching a war, which is not the issue.

The element of peaceful coexistence and the unity of countries in the Arab and Islamic world remain the main obstacle and barrier in the way of the imperialist forces; unfortunately this unity is today being demolished to the advantage of imperialism.

I can conclude with the statement that the treaty is a brilliant symbol of relations of a new type, relations between the first triumphant socialist country and the country which is progressing in the first ranks of the national liberation movement hostile to imperialism.

Therefore the treaty between the two friendly countries is to be considered a source of the pride and glory of all of us.

Kondakov: I would like, after our review of the international importance of the treaty, to stress its bilateral importance and its Arab importance; the Soviet and Syrian leaders, proceeding from their mutual desire to consolidate fruitful relations between the Soviet Union and the Syrian Arab Republic in all their numerous aspects and raise these relations on a legal basis to a more advanced level, have decided to conclude a treaty of friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

This treaty, which was signed by Comrades Hafiz al-Asad and Leonid Brezhnev, is a document of extreme importance, aimed at joint mutually-beneficial Syrian-Soviet cooperation and the consolidation of Syria's position of hostility toward imperialism. With the signing of this treaty, the Soviet Union is once again expressing its loyalty to its platform, from which no considerations of personal interests will deter it.

In the speech with Leonid Brezhnev, secretary general of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, made during the reception held in honor of President Hafiz al-Asad, he resolutely declared "the Soviet Union has responded and is responding with determination to those who threaten the security of the Arab countries and peoples and try to impose occupationist usurpationist conspiracies upon them, threaten them with their military bases, and send warships to their coasts, and those who use for the purposes of their benefit the abyss of conflict in this region."

It is no coincidence that many of the media in the Arab countries have written to express Arab masses' deep feelings by stating that the Soviet-Syrian treaty is a living expression of the hand of friendship which the Soviet Union has extended to the Arabs and the guarantee of its support and backing for them in their struggle for the honor of the Arab nation and the security of the Arab land and resources.

Rassadin: In talking about the treaty, let me begin from the contrary sense, to state who is standing against the treaty, attacking it and trying to create a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of it, and why. However, at first I will proceed from a discussion on the positive aspects of the treaty, which one can talk about at length, though I will summarize these positive matters in three points:

The first point: the treaty strengthens Syria's position in confronting Israeli aggression and Israeli expansion policy.

The second point: the treaty has become a preventive deterrent to the implementation of imperialist conspiracies, especially American ones, and to the implementation of the Camp David schemes. Implementation of these schemes has become a harder task, following the signing and conclusion of the treaty.

The third point: the special importance of the treaty, in the actual conditions of the current Arab and international situation -- especially since, as has been said here, American war equipment is being sent to the Near and Middle East, especially the Gulf area.

The treaty, in my opinion, has become an element deterring those who conjure up dreams of acting with presumption against the independence of the other countries in the region.

As regards those who are standing against the treaty, it would be excellent if I brought in some statements so that matters could be in their place. Let me start with the United States. American officials have adhered to caution in their statements from the beginning, but the matter becomes clearer if we review the orientations of the American newspapers, the news agencies and radio and television networks. Not long ago the ASSOCIATED PRESS agency wrote "The treaty is to be considered just a psychological gambit on Syria's part for the sake of standing up to Israeli aggression."

A psychological gambit and nothing else? This is the deduction which the Americans have reached, and in itself it is an attempt to misinterpret the role of the treaty and belittle its significance.

In another area, the Americans themselves are compelled to acknowledge the fact that Syria has never been stronger than it is now, and the correspondents now present in Syria, who have come there as representatives of the ASSOCIATED PRESS, UPI and the other agencies, find themselves compelled to acknowledge this fact.

The Israeli reaction, in my opinion, also deserves attention. In a statement he made last 11 November, we find Begin stating that the treaty is a very serious step against Israel and declaring openly that this treaty is against Israel's aggressive policy -- but naturally he does not use the words aggression, expansion and the like because he refuses to call things by their real names.

What is also odd is the Egyptian reaction, especially the reaction of the Egyptian press. Let us take the newspaper AL-AHRAM, whose editor in chief, in the article he published on 17 October 1980, tried to make inflammatory propaganda against the

contents of the treaty, considering it — and here we quote his words — "a great step in realizing the Soviet Union's dream of establishing a new Afghanistan among the Arab countries," speaking about the "readiness" of what he described as the Syrian regime to "sell everything for the sake of staying in power" and stating that the Soviet Union "has acquired a new square in the chess game in the struggle with the United States."

Koryavin: Put briefly, the writer wanted to talk about al-Sadat in this article, but by changing names and titles.

Rassadin: Indeed. However, that emphasizes another fact; if the imperialist and Zionist enemies and the Egyptian regime are attacking the treaty, that means that it has struck its target and is annoying them greatly.

However, the statements which I have cited are only a surplus of the surplus — there are dozens and dozens of statements and remarks which are starting to be repeated and continued besides them. In general, there is nothing astonishing in the fact that Western propaganda is thus trying, as it has tried before, to sabotage relations between Syria and the Soviet Union, and will continue in this error by various ways and means, including some which will directly or indirectly defame the treaty on grounds that it does not coincide with the position of one side or the other, and so on and so forth.

I would also like to add that the people making these statements have not taken the care to read the treaty. As regards the attacks on Syria and the Soviet Union which allege that we have unchaste military and political goals, it is explicitly mentioned in Article Four of the treaty that the Soviet Union honors the policy of nonalignment which Syria is following, which is to be considered the most important element in the issue of maintaining and supporting world peace and security and reducing the severity of international tension. These expressions are clear and explicit and do not require comment.

From all the foregoing, we reach a useful conclusion, which is that the attack on the treaty is aimed only at defaming it and at detracting from its importance.

Ojanesyan: There is an addition which I would like to make on Western provocations and propaganda, which try to make Syria appear as if it embarked on this treaty under the impulse of its domestic situation, although these circles know for certain that Syria has taken great strides along the road to consolidating its internal front and implanting its progressive detachments against conspiracies by the forces of domestic reaction.

The purpose behind these international fabrications is to cast a shadow on the truth and sincerity of the intentions of the Syrian party and to ignore Syria's strategic goal in the treaty, which the leaders of the party and the government in Syria have spoken about more than once.

This is an important point which draws one's attention because the counter-propaganda thereby wishes to devoid the treaty of its real content and cast doubt on its goals. These allegations offend the truth; Syria's true intentions are not besmirched by doubt — the stipulations of the treaty, in all of their letters, give proof of that.

Koryavin: The power of this treaty lies in the fact that it truly expresses real intentions and bears in its text the signature of the two countries to the realization that they are following fixed, continuous policies over a long period of time.

There is an observation which I might add on the position of the Egyptian regime. Although the treaty is not directed against other powers, we see that it appears to the Egyptian leaders to be a subjective factor which manifests itself in auctioneering over the issue of consolidating relations and horizons for cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Arab countries through treaties, agreements and so forth. The spirit and essence of the treaty, as we have previously mentioned, explode all these fraudulent statements.

AL-BA'TH's correspondent: In my opinion one of the most important sources of strength in this treaty remains the conviction of the masses in Syria and the Soviet Union alike in it; our leaders, by signing this treaty, have proceeded from their previous realization of the results of the mass vote on the treaty and have thus expressed the will of the broad masses in the two countries.

Fomin: This is true. All domestic progressive forces and parties, in the framework of the National Progressive Front — the Communist Party, the Socialist Union — have supported this step, and the National Progressive Front, in its meetings, has approved the treaty.

What merits attention is the fact that Zionism is mentioned twice in the treaty. The issue is confined to the fact that a large segment of world public opinion is in the Western countries, which lie under specific influence of Zionist propaganda and to a large degree do not realize the tragic state of the Palestinian Arab people, who were expelled from their homeland more than 30 years ago. [Several lines missing.]

Regardless of the fact that an international organization with a lofty status such as the United Nations has adopted a special resolution condemning Zionism as a form of racism, you see people in the Western countries, and some other countries, who are still unaware of the real nature of Zionism as a reactionary extremist racist movement constituting a threat to peace not just in the Middle East but also in the whole world through its hostile acts.

The discussion here revolves around Zionism, the adherents of a high-sounding fanatic idea. The Arabs have never been fanatic; we have all been in Syria and we know that Jews are living in Damascus and other towns today and that not a hair has fallen from the hair of any Jew, which emphasizes that the Arabs have never been anti-Semitic and have lived in peace alongside them for centuries.

Fomin: Thus, as we have said, emphasis is placed twice in the treaty on the need to struggle against Zionism. In the preamble it is stated that the Soviet Union and the Syrian Arab Republic are fully determined to stand against the policy of aggression which imperialism and its aides are practicing in a resolute fashion and to continue the struggle against old and new colonialism and against racism in all its forms and manifestations, including Zionism. Article Three of the treaty says that the two lofty contracting parties, out of belief in the equality of all

peoples and countries, regardless of race and religion, condemn colonialism, Zionism and racism, of which it is a form and manifestation.

The fact that the condemnation of Zionism is included in an important international legal document like the treaty we are studying thoroughly and that the two countries are determined to stand up against it in all its forms is, without a doubt, to be considered a serious contribution to the struggle against these anti-human notions, and the fact that this is mentioned in the treaty is a matter of the utmost importance, because every treaty is a source of international law, which means that international law has once again been enriched by a new content, which is the matter of the urgent struggle against Zionism, which inflicts harm not only on the Arab peoples but also on many other peoples in the world.

AL-BATH's correspondent: The treaty has placed the two countries' relations on the threshold of a new stage, which is to be considered a quantitative strategic turning point in the history of these relations. It would be very nice if we paused, while we are intending to discuss the friendship treaty, at the horizons for the development of relations between our two countries in the coming stage.

Rassadin: I would like to deal with the horizons of the development in Soviet-Syrian relations in the economic sphere. It is necessary to talk a little about the manner in which these relations developed in the past.

These relations had developed in a good manner even before the signing of the treaty. The treaty came only as a development, a deepening of and an incentive for these relations; the article of the treaty which stipulates that the two parties will help to deepen and expand economic, scientific and technical cooperation is very useful. Economic cooperation includes industry, agriculture, irrigation, water resources and the use of oil and other natural resources, and it contains the branches of transportation, communications and other fields of the economy.

As you see, the scope for economic cooperation is very broad. The most important thing, in my opinion, is that this help the resurgence and development of the Syrian domestic economy, especially the consolidation of the public sector; this indicates what distinguishes the nature of relations between our country and the other socialist countries and the developing countries, especially Syria, from the relations between the capitalist countries and what are called their partners in the fields of trade and economy in the developing world.

The Euphrates Dam remains the living example which expresses the nature of our cooperation. Power from the dam will provide more than 70 percent of the electric energy the country generates, and the dam will provide resources for irrigating 600,000 hectares of barren land. This means that Syria will be able to expand its agricultural exports, which is the object of the future, perhaps the near future.

We also are reading with great optimism of our cooperation in the field of oil. There is no need here to stress the vital importance of this economic field — it is sufficient for us to point out that the oil producing industry now provides

the major portion of the hard currency income of the country. We must strengthen our future cooperation in the field of establishing massive major projects such as the construction of big factories and plants which will help to implant the bases of modern industrialization. It is necessary for us, in our cooperation, to give great attention to the laying of railways, since we have past experience in this field, and the ambitious plans to expand the railway system in Syria are applied that will make a big contribution to linking up all parts of the country economically, socially and industrially.

We reach the conclusion that we have great resources for cooperating on a basis of good will and mutual benefit. Finally, I would like to point out that the development of economic relations is a two-way street; we in our turn are happy to receive certain traditional Syrian exports such as textiles, silk, light industries and so forth, and these exports must develop qualitatively and quantitatively in the future.

Koryavin: I would like to add some words on domestic industry and domestic staffs. I would like to recite to you the following fact: when we were in Beirut, working as journalists, people thrust a publication in English and in Arabic titled "Israel in the Year 2000 upon us." These publications were distributed to the bureaus of foreign correspondents and embassies on purpose by some well known forces.

As a result of that, at that time the article by the late Soviet journalist Mayevski appeared in PRAVDA exposing the essence of this publication, which wanted to provide that in 2000 Israel would become "a peaceful state which would become integrated through its relations with the Arab countries." The call was directed, as is apparent, to the Arab countries; the publication wondered why the Arab countries should turn to cooperation with the West, not to speak of relations with the Soviets, and ask them for teachers, doctors and military experts at a time when Israel exists alongside them and can provide the Arab countries with such specialists: we -- the publication said -- must combine Israel's expertise with the tremendous reserves of Arab resources and form a small metropolis which will impose its terms on the East and the West alike.

AL-BA'TH's correspondent: That publication must have fallen into al-Sadat's hands at that time!

Koryavin: Maybe so, because that is what they are doing now in Egypt; here appears the portrait of the old colonialism and the thinking of the old imperialism: if you offer us oil, form a tributary of raw materials for us, and supply us with cheap manpower, we will export brains to you!

This is precisely a skilful Zionist expansionist theory -- a neocolonialist theory; therefore the creation of domestic personnel in the Arab world who are themselves able to run massive installations and projects becomes a very important matter for the development of an integrated economy.

I believe that wherever we have had joint projects between Syria and the Soviet Union, we have felt that the study courses established here are one of the fruits of cooperation between us -- the Euphrates Dam has not just been an industrial

complex, it is also a great school for preparing domestic specialists, and in my opinion any professor or teacher who returns from Syria should feel proud to have contributed a modest portion to the matter of building domestic staffs. There are now close to 30,000 engineers and technicians who have been trained by contribution of the Soviet Union, and thus the issue of the training of domestic staffs has become one of the most important issues in the construction of a new life, and is at the same time an effective weapon in the struggle against Zionism and colonialism in its new and old forms.

Fomin: As regards the issue of brains, that at the present time is assuming an opposite trend. We see that people in Tel Aviv are now anxious in the face of the increasing number of Arab scientific specialists and researchers, especially Palestinians, whose number is many times greater than that of Israeli specialists. The Soviet Union is proud of its contribution and its part in training Arab staffs.

Lebedev: Let me talk a little bit about the horizons of our cooperation in the scientific field, as long as we are talking about the creation of technical staffs; this is a matter which is closely linked to the scientific aspect.

One element in the strengthening of friendly relations between our two countries, I believe, is the scientific contacts, which have numerous facets and take place through the Soviet Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and its Syrian counterpart, and to some extent through the Academy of Sciences.

The signing of the treaty will provide an opportunity for the conclusion of a scientific agreement between the two countries, and this is a matter which enters into the scope of our joint responsibilities.

As regards our scientific cooperation at the present time, everyone knows full well that many Syrian students are studying in the Soviet Union, including people studying with us in the Institute of Oriental Studies. We have had many students taking higher studies by correspondence and people who have defended their theses with exceptional success and are now working in many sensitive areas in the country. Five thousand Syrian students are now preparing to receive doctorates, they are now working seriously, and I believe that they will complete their studies with success.

The scientific works which we have published on Syria are more than can be counted, but I can mention some of the more important ones. Let me start with the books that have been published and translated into foreign languages, including the book "The Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate" and "The Modern History of the Arabs" by the scholar Levitsky, which we published after his death, relying on his drafts, summaries and the lectures he gave at Moscow University. The book has been translated into Arabic and English.

After that, in 1961, there appeared the book "The Modern History of the Arab Countries," in Russian, which was then translated into Arabic and brought out in two volumes in 1971. The first volume was devoted to the Asian Arab countries and the second one to the African Arab countries.

A great event in scholarly life was also the emergence of the book "Modern Syria" which contains important scholarly reference material on the history and development of the Syrian Arab Republic, in olden and modern times.

In conclusion, I would like to state that we have just finished preparing the second printing of the book "Modern History of the Arab Countries" and that will see light in 1981.

The modern history of Syria will occupy an important portion of the material in the book.

Famin: I would like to point to one other dimension of the development of our relations. In the treaty, there is also talk about the two countries' determination to develop cooperation in the field of the media (Article Nine).

Here there are journalists who have written dozens of times about Syria in Soviet newspapers, magazines and periodicals, in addition to television reportage, in particular the reportage by Comrade Rassadin, which was seen by 260 million Soviet viewers. In Syria, also, a large group of articles have been published on the Soviet Union and on the friendship between our two countries.

Thus our work in the field of the media is progressing in a parallel line; our "round table" today can be viewed as a point of departure in the field of the media, and a useful, desirable form of journalistic action. We can multiply these symposia in the future through the press of the two countries.

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/Text/ AL-BA'TH's correspondent: As I see it, our comrades' interventions are focused on giving prominence to the stage of the seventies in our history and the development of relations between two countries, which is a logical conception. In our country's life, this stage has been one of qualitative transition from experiments to options. As far as we are concerned, these years have not been a museum, they have been a workshop, a real workshop which has produced many achievements. New expressions have appeared in the dictionary of everyday political life: the November of correction, the October of liberation, the permanent constitution, the People's Assembly and the National Progressive Front. The option is that there is room only for progress and socialism in our country. Academician Kondakov has witnessed this stage through attention, followup and observations in the field. Could he speak to us of his views and impressions?

Kondakov: I have been in Syria three times, love that country with all my heart and love its splendid hospitable people, who are engaged in a heroic distinguished struggle on the front lines of the battle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction and for the sake of a free dignified life and social progress. The continuing platform of obvious hostility to imperialism which the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party is pursuing, and its sincere desire to expand friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries, has always met with the support and backing of the Soviet peoples. This platform has also met with constant support on the part of the broad masses in Syria. However, the implacable stand which the Syrian Arab Republic is taking on the Camp David conspiracy,

its firm determination to liberate the occupied Arab territories and restore the usurped rights of the Palestinian Arab peoples, including their right to establish their independent state on their motherland, and the political moral support which Syria is providing to national democratic movements, have met with extreme indignation in the camp of enmity to the liberation and social progress of the peoples. It has happened that imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction have coordinated their efforts in recent years for the sake of getting Syria to deviate from its announced platform of a Socialist face and compelling it to swerve from its fixed policy of principle of antagonism to imperialism.

These enemies have given free rein to political pressure, economic boycott and attempts to export counterrevolution through the "Moslem Brothers" and threats of direct armed intervention on Israel's side.

The Syrian Arab people's answer to the destructive activity which foreign and domestic enemies have been carrying out against the progressive regime in Syria has been to assert their determination to preserve the political and social triumphs they have realized, strengthen their domestic unity by strengthening the role of the Progressive National Front in all fields of life, and release the social and political activities of the broad masses in order to deepen the revolutionary process in the country.

Stress has been made at meetings of the central command of the National Progressive Front, at conferences of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, and at conferences of the front parties on the fact that subsequent development of friendship and cooperation with countries in the socialists system, headed by the Soviet Union, is a sure guarantee of the successes of the Syrian Arab people in the struggle to thwart the schemes of neoimperialism and for the sake of the freedom of their country and the whole Arab East.

Lebedev: Relations are progressing in this direction among the major parties in Syria. The Progressive National Front was established in 1972; in its charter it is stated that it was formed "as a preliminary step along the road to unification of the detachments of the Arab revolution in Syria, which is to be considered an urgent necessity in the current phase for mobilizing forces and supporting the domestic front in the face of the vicious Zionist imperialist attack." It was stated that this front was formed "in order to deepen the cooperation of the masses who have real interests in revolution and development, to deepen democracy, and to cause the innovative powers of the masses to burst forth." The vanguard forces in the Arab world have always enjoyed the support of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet government in the struggle against the intervention of other forces in their domestic affairs, and PRAVDA has written "The Soviet Communist Party considers that its goal is to strengthen the cooperation of the forces of socialism and national liberation on grounds of mutual interest, for the sake of standing up to the divisive tactics which imperialist and reactionary circles practice, and for the sake of real unity in daily practice directed against imperialism and toward peace, liberation and social justice."

Koryavin: I consider it proper for us to pause, if you permit, before one of the great events of the seventies in Damascus — October 1973 and the great tribulation it was our fortune, mine and that of Comrade Fomin, to be there, and

my personal reminiscences as a journalist are with me now. I was a little late and arrived after the start of the war, on that tragic day when the Israeli Phantom aircraft flew over Damascus and bombed civilian targets, and the bombing hit the Soviet Cultural Center.

Fomin: They later tried to justify this act of theirs on grounds that they wanted to bomb military targets but in reality wanted to bomb civilian areas, and they actually did so.

Koryavin: These were in fact the justifications of Israeli propaganda. When the Soviet Cultural Center was bombed, the Soviet teacher Galincheva was martyred. Let us state here explicitly that our friendship has confirmed this example by blood; we later buried this woman in Moscow. She was a participant in the great national war of 1941-45. Also martyred was the Arab jurist Muhammad Amin. In the course of the October 1973 war, a qualitative change occurred in the psychology of the Arab countries, since an end was put to the myth of "the Israeli army that cannot be defeated" in Syria specifically. We realize that more than anyone else because we went through this state of affairs in the great national war and we remember the Hitlerite theory on "the German military machine which cannot be defeated" and its reliance on the theory of blitzkrieg (lightning war). It is not by coincidence that we are making this comparison here. The myth of the "Israeli army which cannot be defeated" was crushed, on the Syrian front specifically, and we saw with our own eyes the destruction of the Phantom aircraft which fell near Damascus in 1973, saw the blows raining down on the tank divisions which tried to make a breakthrough to Damascus but could not, and saw the heroic struggle of Syrian citizens in the popular army who readied themselves to defend Damascus and other areas with exceptional discipline. If we now look at the past of the development of all these events, we will see the stability and continuity of Syria's policies of principle on issues connected to the Middle East crisis, their refusal to bargain for a separate deal at Camp David, and their desire to solve the Middle East problem in all its manifestations -- before all else, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories and satisfaction of the legitimate demands of the Palestinian Arab people. This is not a position of words, it is a position of deeds.

The Egyptian regime is taking a contradictory stance, trying to thwart the important positive results of the October war and play with the cards of the issue as a whole; today all Egypt is being turned into an American military base.

The issue may be summarized by the fact that the United States is now trying to infiltrate into the Middle East, not just through the presence of its fleet in Arab waters and the presence of some of its air fighting forces in specific military bases -- it wants the concentration and mobilization of whole brigades preparatory to transferring them to areas of war operations under the excuse that the Soviet Union is threatening this area.

These are the reasons for the American presence in Egypt and the region. It is not by chance that in our press and in the progressive press of the West the expression "nation base" has appeared by which we mean Egypt, since the Americans want to concentrate tens of thousands of military personnel there in order to transfer them en masse to fight against Iran and against other countries in that region.

AL-BATIN's correspondent: I believe that we are right in pausing at length before the October war of liberation, because this war put positions under bright sunlight — the positions of the people who stand alongside aggression and the position of the people who stand alongside the victims of aggression.

Fomin: The days of October are not absent from my memory. During them, the high spirit and perseverance of the Syrian Arab people made themselves manifest — the perseverance of Damascus and the other towns. On 9 October 1973, some Phantom aircraft managed to penetrate the air over Damascus and their objective was to bomb civilians.

On 11 October, I saw with my own eyes in Damascus how the Syrian air defense managed to bring down close to 80 Israeli aircraft along the front lines. That was tantamount to revenge for the crime which the Israeli "crows" carried out; it stirred up unparalleled enthusiasm among the people of Damascus and it was not in their capability to hide their happiness with the Syrian combatants and their skill, since they managed to see that directly in the air.

Rassadin: If I can speak about my personal recollections, I can remember an important moment. I had the chance to travel to Syria for the first time in 1974, that is, after the October war of liberation. I remember full well that that was one of my first trips to Damascus, specifically in December 1974, when my Syrian comrades advised me to visit the War Museum. I responded to the advice and visited it, and I recall that we met there with a group of pupils and their teachers, who had brought them to the museum, after classes were over in school to recite to them the story of the October war a year after it had taken place with living evidence.

The teacher started to recite the events and spoke about the solidarity, the stands and the heroic acts. Believe me, for 2 or 3 hours I could not go out of there; a real, long discussion took place with the pupils and the teacher. The children, who were no more than 13 or 14 years old, asked us dozens of questions about our country and our relations, and I was amazed by their awareness and their great interest in our country and the development of our relations.

I have another example. I remember when I was at the Euphrates Dam. Unfortunately, I was not present at the start of the construction of the dam, but I was there at the end, in 1978. At that time I traveled to the dam and everything was ready for the inauguration ceremonies. Many conversations took place between us and between the Syrians and the Soviets working there, and I felt wherever I went a spirit of friendly human relations and a spirit of desire for cooperation and joint action.

In a word, the spirit of real friendship was deepened through the projects of friendship, foremost of which was the Euphrates project. Here a conversation occurs to me which took place between the Soviets and the Syrians at a meeting, in which the specialists said clearly, "Our task here is confined to handing the keys over to the Syrians. It is a Syrian dam on Syrian soil, and we are always ready to help you and cooperate with you.

"However, the keys must remain in your hands, and you will administer this dam with your hands."

AL-BATH's correspondent: The Syrian Arab-Soviet and Soviet-Syrian Friendship Societies are striving seriously to deepen and develop friendship between the two countries on a broad mass scale. The activity of the two societies enjoys great appreciation on the part of the leaders and the people of both countries. Could Comrade Molchanov, chief of the Arab Division of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship, talk to us about that in detail?

Molchanov: It would be worthwhile for me to point out, first, that this round table which is gathering Syrian and Soviet journalists together is taking place in the Press Building. There is nothing surprising about this, since most of the people taking part in this symposium are members of the friendship societies in both countries. Here I would like to point out that there are a number of agreements between the Soviet Union and Syria, but the first of these agreements to be concluded and in which the use of the word "friendship" appears often was the agreement signed by the Friendship Societies in Syria and the Soviet Union. The basic principles stipulated by the agreement now find an embodiment in the treaty signed by the two countries.

The best proof of that is that the signing of the treaty was accompanied by spontaneous meetings in Soviet organizations, authorities and installations to bless this treaty. An enormous mass meeting also took place in the Institute of Water Design in Moscow. Those who met sent a telegram of support for the treaty which they sent to the Syrian Arab-Soviet Friendship Society.

The conclusion of the treaty opens new horizons before us and lays new tasks on our shoulders. The friendship societies in our country are exerting maximum effort to acquaint public opinion in the Soviet Union and Syria with the Soviet Union's historic experience and expertise in building socialism on the one hand and the successes and victories which the Syrian Arab people are winning in their difficult struggle on the other.

Fomin: I can add a little to the role of Syrian-Soviet friendship, which is part of Arab-Soviet friendship and Soviet-Arab friendship. It is not a coincidence that imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction as embodied in the Sadatist regime are trying most of all to weaken and destroy Arab-Soviet friendship, because this friendship is to be considered an important element helping the Arab countries to solve their domestic problems and their internal domestic and foreign political problems together. In conclusion, I can state that the real national forces in the progressive Arab countries, and in the forefront in Syria, highly value the import of the treaty of friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Syria and consider it of use and benefit to the whole Arab nation.

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